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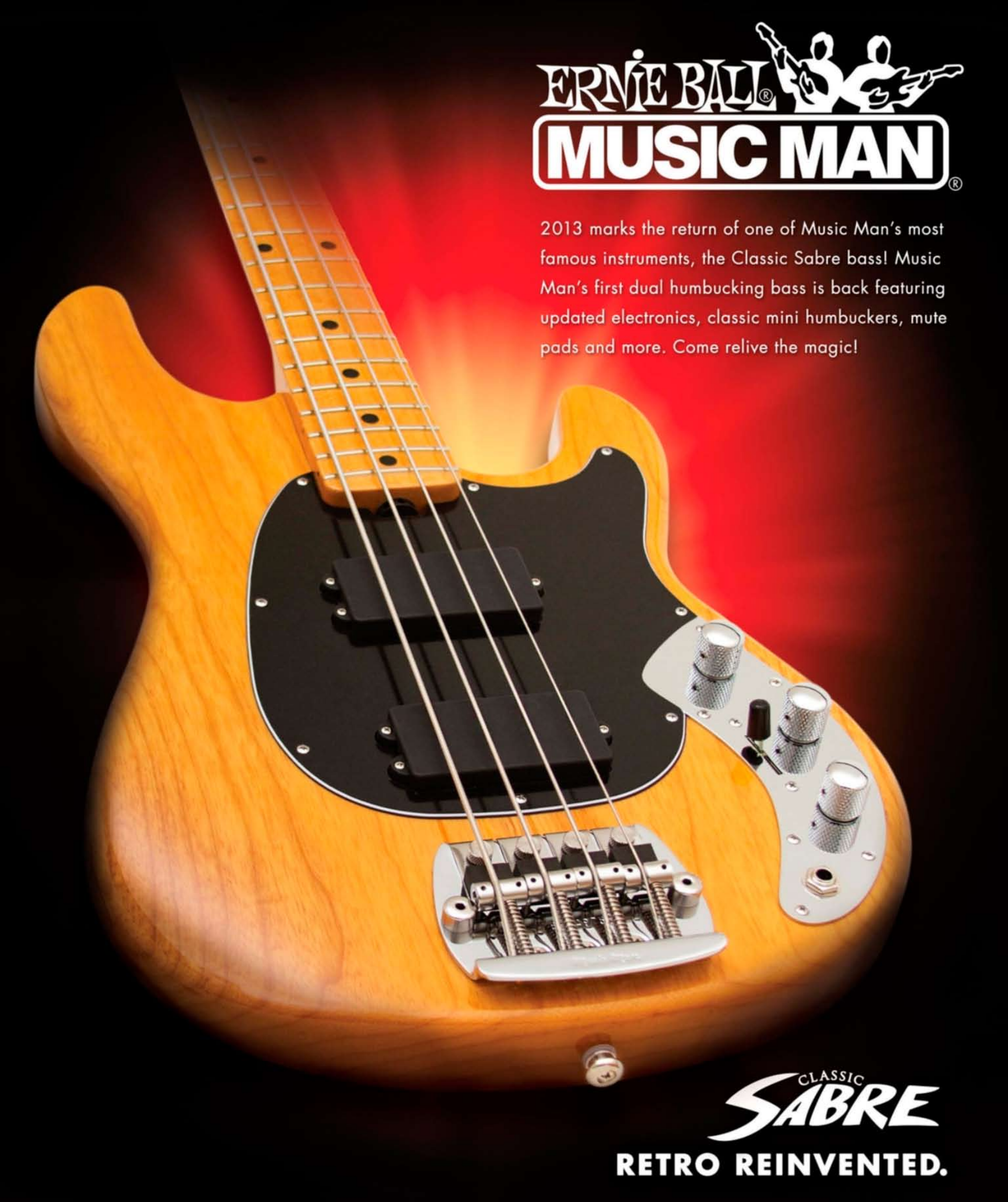
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As if you need it. Geezer Butler, Tal Wilkenfeld, Lee Rocker, and a host of other rockers, groovers, funkateers, and jazzbos will be on hand to bro out on all things bass, and so too should you.

Can't make it? Well, mark your calendar and start feeding that piggy bank for next year, because we're already planning to raise the bar even further. And take comfort in the issue of BP you hold in your hot little hands. If you don't already know him, get hip to Johnny Christ. Get your groove on with Phil Chen and Jeff Beck in our "Freeway Jam" transcription. Drool yourself dehydrated checking out the coolest in new gear. And whatever you do, dig in, and dig deep!.

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My equipment, just like my life, is now simple. At 58, I now choose to approach my life and my music in a more sensible fashion, opting for better quality and portability. My sound and my tone remains the same, but with far less baggage. —RICK KLOSKEY

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COURT OF OPINION

To whom should we present a Lifetime Achievement Awards at next year's Bass Player LIVE!?

Join the conversation at facebook.com/bassplayermag.

Dug Pinnick from King's X.
—Richard Kidd

Dug Pinnick from King's X! He has been an inspiration to a generation of players. He is a musician's musician, an innovative bassist/singer/songwriter, and a genuinely cool guy. No wonder everyone wants Dug to collaborate with them on their projects. I can think of no one more deserving to be recognized for his contribution to music over the past 25-plus years. **—Jonathan Stuart**

Dug, ya dig?
—David Butgereit

Dug Pinnick of King's X, Poundhound, and Pinnick Gales Pridgen.
—Brian Meyer

Dug Pinnick has an amazing and unique sound, and he's just an all-around fantastic guy.
—Kelli Book-Evans

I definitely like the idea of giving it to Dug Pinnick. Great playing. Unique tone. Willing to bounce out for dinner with fans after a show. **—Jefferson Cosgrove**

Five best bass players of all time: Dug, Dug, Dug, Dug and Dug.
—Kelly Watson

Dug Pinnick of King's X, no doubt.
—Jared Calkins

Dug Pinnick would be my vote, as well. Great player, monstrous tone!
—Jason Ellenbogen

Dug Pinnick would be a great choice. Underrated band, underrated player, undeniable influence.
—Geoff Robinson

Dug Pinnick for sure... Tone king, vocalist, badass, and nicest guy around!
—Keith Tomlinson

If Geddy Lee hasn't been given this honor, duh. Same for Chris Squire, Les Claypool, & Flea. But I echo the sentiments of nearly everybody else here: Dug Pinnick is a legend, both as a musician and a human being. **—Dave Steiner**

TIMELINE

This Month In Bass: December

1st Electric bass icon and fretless pioneer Jaco Pastorius born, **1951**.

5th Dr. Art Davis, clinical psychologist and influential jazz and classical bassist, born, **1934**.

6th Weather Report co-founder Miroslav Vitous born, **1947**. A trio of studio bass gods—Gordon Edwards, Tony Levin, and David Hood—puts the bottom under Paul Simon's No. 1 album *Still Crazy After All These Years*, **1975**.

7th Barry White, armed with a Wilton Felder bass line, hits No. 1 with "You're the First, The Last, My Everything," **1974**. Sting and the Police's "Walking on the Moon" is tops in the U.K., **1979**.

8th Session superman Nathan East born, **1955**.

9th Rick Danko of The Band born, **1943**. Jack Bruce and Cream release their debut, *Fresh Cream*, **1966**. Bernard Edwards' iconic bass line takes Chic's "Le Freak" to No. 1, **1978**.

10th Rick Danko dies, **1999**.

11th Sting, Miles Davis, and Rolling Stones sideman Darryl Jones born, **1961**.

14th Bill Wyman makes his live debut with the Rolling Stones, **1962**. A James Jamerson bass line helps Marvin Gaye score his first U.S. No. 1 with "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," **1968**.

15th Clash bassist Paul Simonon born, **1955**.

16th Billy Paul's "Me and Mrs. Jones," with 19-year-old Anthony Jackson on bass, hits No. 1 in the U.S., **1972**.

17th R.E.M. bass man Mike Mills born, **1958**.

18th Tom "T-Bone" Wolk's Jamerson-inspired bass part pushes Hall & Oates' "Maneater" to the No. 1 spot, **1982**.

20th Punk icon and supremely prolific bass man Mike Watt born, **1957**.

22nd Upright virtuoso/composer Giovanni Bottesini born, **1821**. Upright/electric doubler and 6-string icon John Patitucci born, **1959**. Dee Murray's bass parts and background vocals help push Elton John's "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" to the top of the charts, **1973**.

23rd Spinal Tap's Derek Smalls born as actor/comedian Harry Shearer, **1943**.

24th Motörhead leader Lemmy born, **1945**.

25th The Eagles' *Hotel California*, adorned with the falsetto and bass work of Randy Meisner, is No. 1, **1976**.

26th New Orleans bass godfather and Meters co-founder George Porter Jr. born, **1947**.

27th John Paul Jones and the boys get their first No. 1 album, *Led Zeppelin II*, **1969**. John Deacon's electric, upright, acoustic guitar, electric piano, and vocal contributions are all over Queen's U.K. No. 1 album *A Night at the Opera*, **1976**.

28th George Harrison, aided by either Klaus Voorman or Carl Radle on bass, rules the airwaves with "My Sweet Lord," **1971**.

31st Jazz bassist/bandleader/tuba player John Kirby born, **1908**. Aerosmith bass man Tom Hamilton born, **1951**. AC/DC, with original bassist Larry Van Kreidt, plays its first show, **1973**.

THE REAL WORLD

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Heroes & inspiration Stanley Clarke, Marcus Miller, Aaron Mills, Wayman Tisdale
Contact www.soundclick.com/sonofpearl

How did you come to play bass?

I am self-taught; my first lessons came from my uncle, a guitar player, who taught me two songs: "Slide," by Slave, and "Brick House," by the Commodores. But once I got into jazz and rock, it was all over. When my mother passed, he had to find a way to keep us off the streets in the projects, and music was the way to keep three boys engaged in a positive manner.

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

It is all about the passion and the "nod factor"—if the bass line cannot immediately make the listener nod, you've lost the true focus of your craft.

What are your musical goals?

To make the kind of music that makes other bass players say to themselves, "I hear ya!" Now that my military career is complete, I would love to give music back to the world. I feel that giving the world music is a selfless act we can all use.

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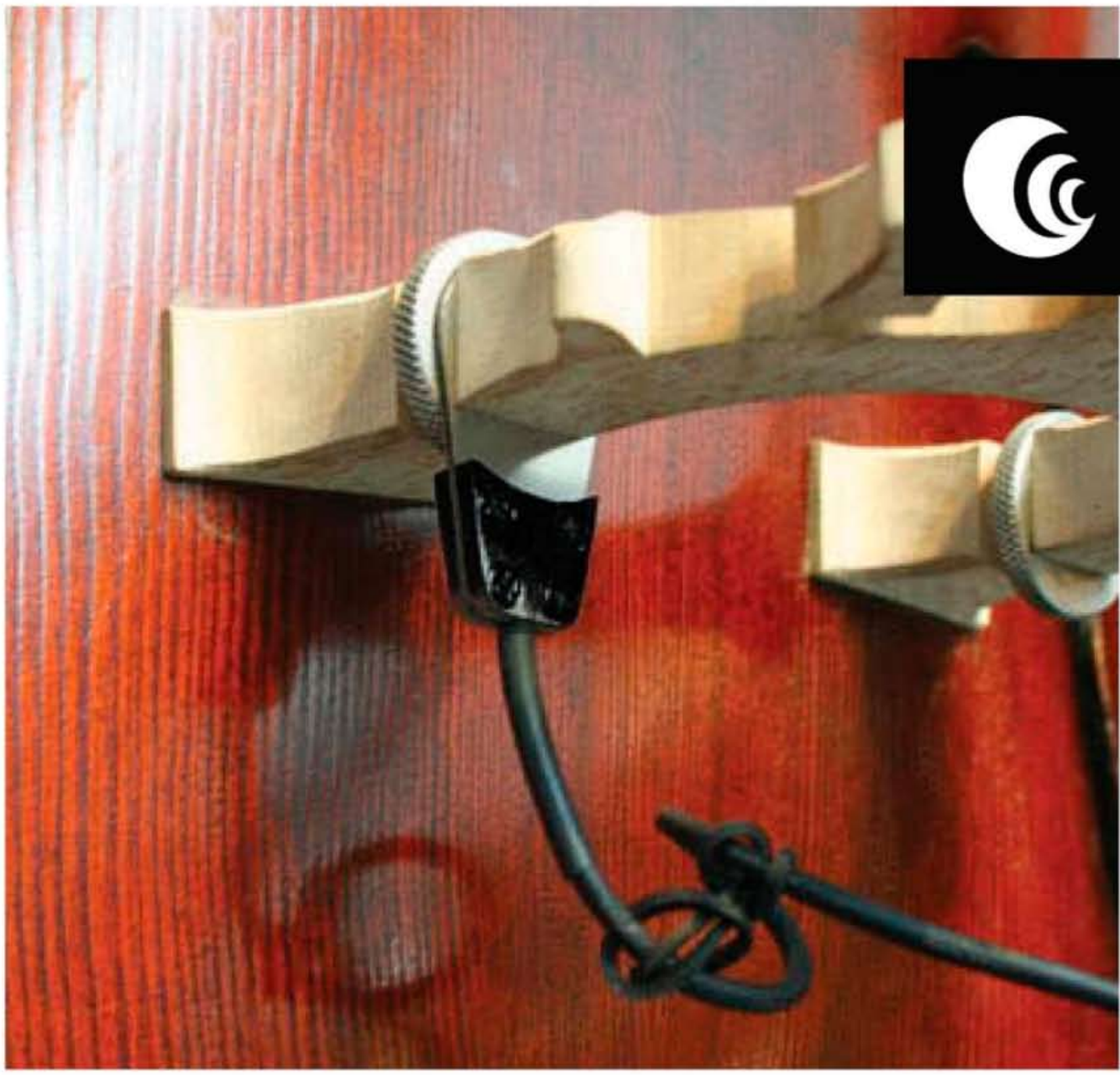

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-John Patitucci

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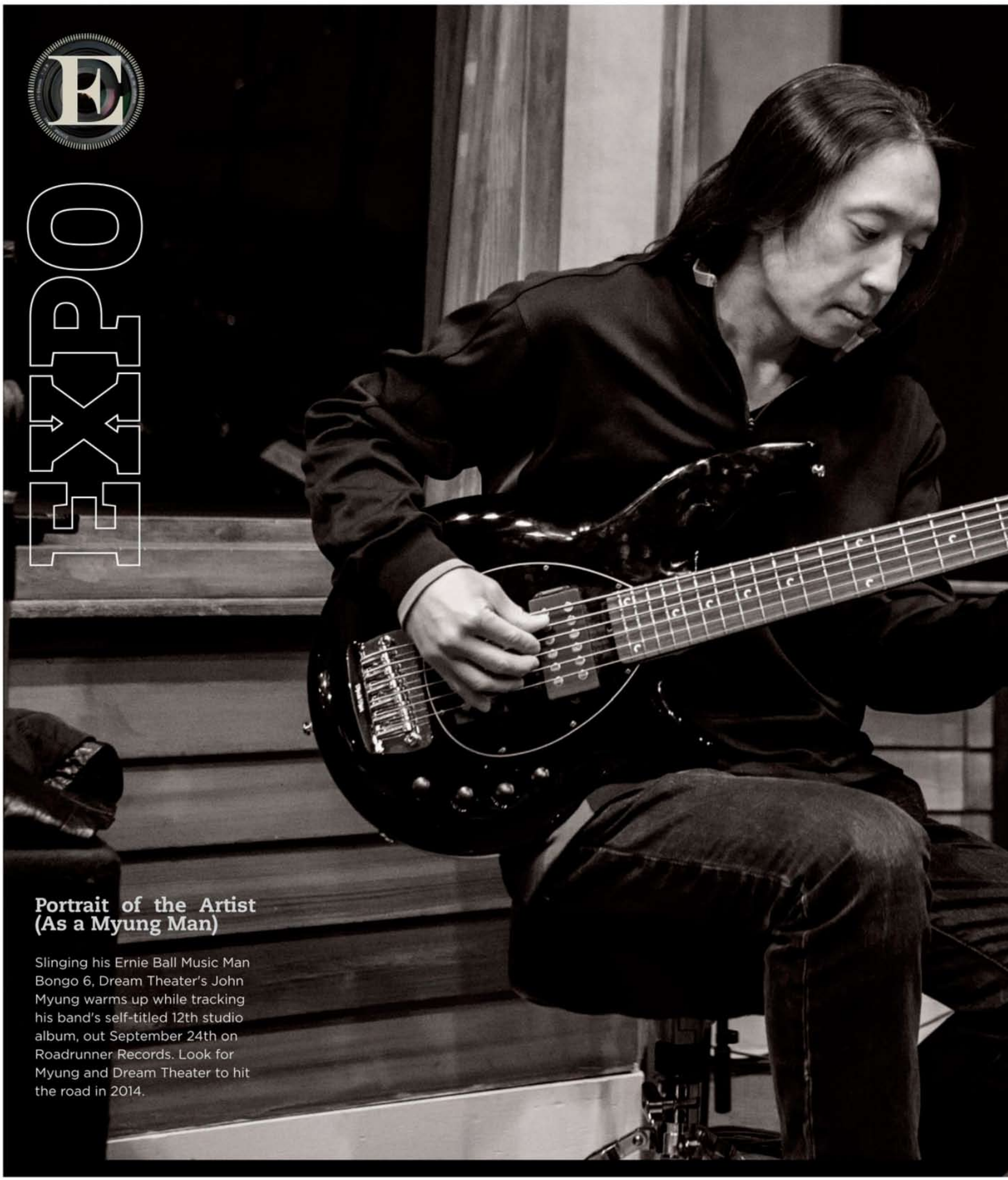

Portrait of the Artist (As a Myung Man)

Slinging his Ernie Ball Music Man Bongo 6, Dream Theater's John Myung warms up while tracking his band's self-titled 12th studio album, out September 24th on Roadrunner Records. Look for Myung and Dream Theater to hit the road in 2014.

MUSIC MAN

BASS NOTES

PANIC! AT THE DISCO

Dallon Weekes

Modern Meets Vintage

BY JON D'AURIA

SHORTLY AFTER THE RELEASE OF ITS SOPHOMORE ALBUM *PRETTY* *Odd* in 2008, Panic! At The Disco hit a rough patch of transition. The departure of two members caused a delay in recording a new album, which ultimately shifted the band's budding creative compass. Fortunately for Panic, singer Brendon Urie recruited bassist Dallon Weekes from the band the Brobecks to fill in as a touring bassist. It was a title that didn't last long: Weekes was soon asked to join as a full-time member. Now on his second album with Panic, Weekes is lending his standout bass lines, driving synth riffs, melodic backup vocals, and creative songwriting to the band's most dance-floor-driven album yet. For his part, Weekes delivers always-moving lines with vintage-style tone, contrasting the band's modern backdrop that blends alternative pop with layers of electronica.

INFO

LISTEN

Panic! At The Disco, *Too Weird to Live, Too Rare to Die* [Fueled By Ramen, 2013]

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How did you get your tone on this album?

I usually take the high end down quite a bit and keep it mostly in the mid and low range. That comes in handy when you use a lot of fuzz, as I often do. Effect pedals have a tendency to drop your low end, and that's just unacceptable. So keeping it in the mid to low range, and having pedals that will respond well to that, are what I go for. When you click on the pedal and it starts shaking your brain, that's when you know you have it dialed in.

"Girls Girls Boys" has a great grooving bass line.

I wrote that on my own, and nobody really wanted to use it for the album. I was actually going to give it to a friend of mine in the band Neon Trees to use. But as we moved on with the writing, I tried to figure out what it was that I liked so much about the song, and I realized it was the bass line. So I took that from it, and we ended up writing a totally different song around it.

How do you approach synth bass versus electric bass?

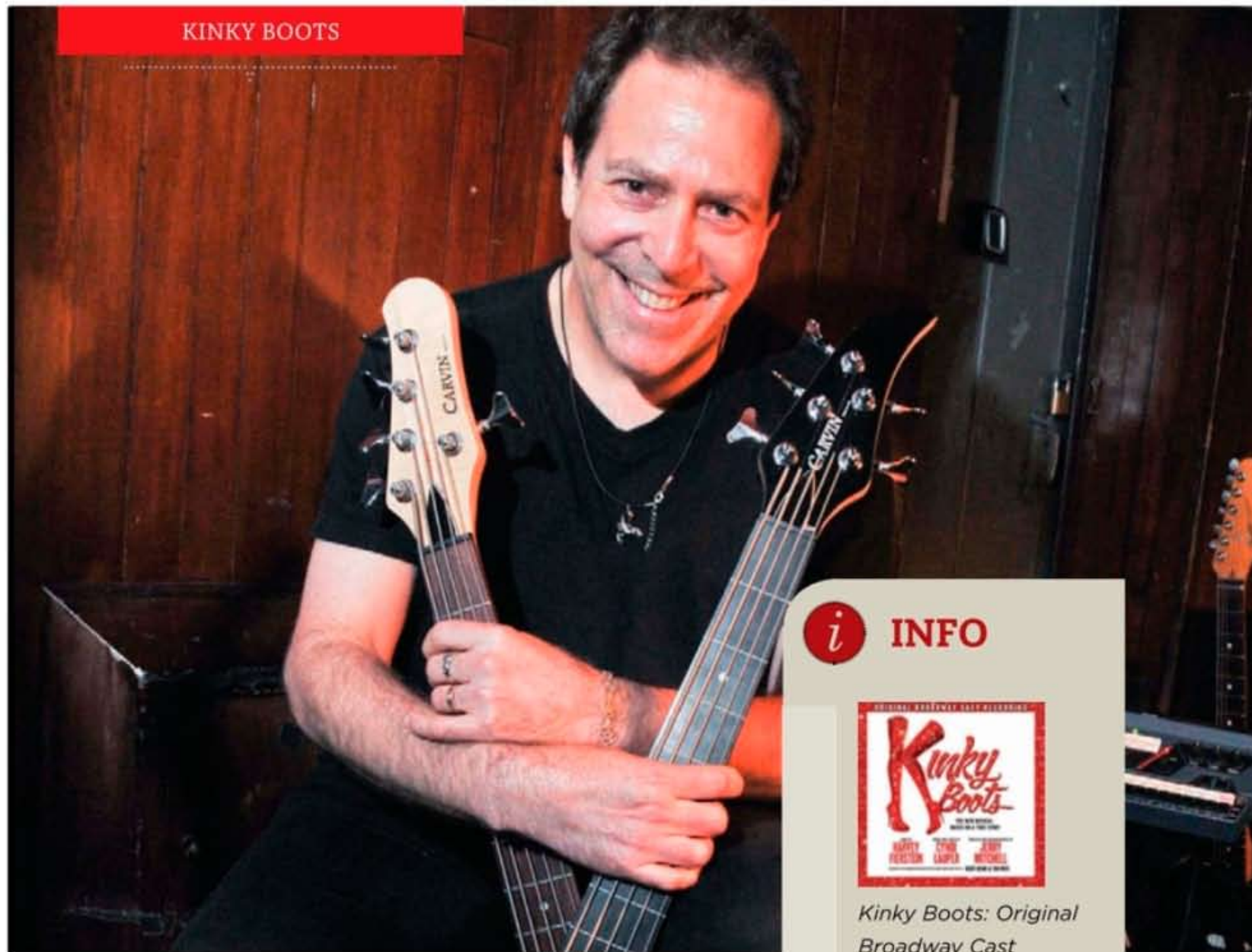
I'm not a great keyboardist, so whenever I sit down to write a synth line, it's usually the most basic form of bass line. With the electric bass, I'm much more comfortable playing the things I hear when I'm writing and executing my lines. It's fun playing synth; it's newer to me, and it's something I really enjoy doing.

Did you try anything new this record?

Trying new things has been the theme of my playing with Panic. When I joined the band, I had to play in odd time signatures and in different tunings for the first time ever. Weird time signatures became a lot of fun and really started clicking for me on this record. It opened some creative doors of my own, and now I'm always trying new things in this band.

How would you describe your playing?

It's all about staying loose. I've always wanted to be like Keith Moon—he was just so loose when he played. Sound-wise, players like Robert Sledge of Ben Folds Five, Sam Farrar of Phantom Planet, and Justin Meldal-Johnsen have heavily influenced my playing over the years. My favorite way to play bass is to get to a point where I can turn off my brain and not have to scrutinize everything I'm doing. **BP**



JENNY ANDERSON

Sole Man

In The Pit Of Kinky Boots With Mike Visceglia

BY CHRIS JISI

MUCH LIKE *KINKY BOOTS'* ARRIVAL ON BROADWAY— adapted from the 2005 film of the same name, and infused with an original score by rock queen Cyndi Lauper—Mike Visceglia didn't travel the traditional route to the Great White Way. The 40-year New York vet, best known for his bottom with Suzanne Vega (that's his subhook on "Luka"), John Cale, Jonatha Brooke, Marshall Crenshaw, Curtis Steigers, and the Turtles, is stepping into his first full-time pit role, courtesy of a veteran Broadway guitarist friend's recommendation. The production's alternative assemblage has resulted in a perfect fit with capacity crowds, leading to six 2013 Tony Awards, including Best Musical and Best Score. We slipped beneath the stage of the Al Hirschfeld Theatre on West 45th Street to watch Visceglia navigate numerous musical styles over the course of the show's two acts.

What was your interaction with Cyndi Lauper?

Cyndi was there for pretty much every rehearsal and preview. It was her mission that we play her music authentically, and as close to the intended styles—which include disco, soul/R&B, glam rock, '80s rock, and moody electronica—as possible. She has a brilliant intuition and had all the right references. For the soul tunes

INFO

LISTEN

Kinky Boots: Original Broadway Cast [Masterworks, 2013]; Suzanne Vega, *Close-Up*, Vol's 1-4 [Cooking Vinyl, 2010-12]; Rick Moranis, *My Mother's Brisket & Other Love Songs* [Warner Bros., 2013]; Mike Visceglia and Fiona McBain, *Then There Were Two* [Mood Swing, 2007]

EQUIP

Basses Carvin 5-string SB5000 and fretless BB5 5-string
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Cables Planet Waves

I was trying to channel Duck Dunn; for glam rock, Queen and David Bowie. When I'm playing a style, I totally commit to it and try to immerse myself in the feel. I think about the way the great recordings of that genre sound. Restraint, bass tone, note length, phrasing, and articulation are the keys to staying true to the music.

Did you have a role in finalizing the bass book?

I was given the freedom to add my personality to the book by our conductor, Brian Usifer. With that in mind, I moved around a few of the registers and added some of my interpretations and expressions to the book, without veering far from the written notes and intent of arranger/orchestrator Stephen Oremus.

How would you describe your rhythm section approach?

We have a unique situation in the *Kinky Boots* pit. We're a 13-piece orchestra, but only 12 of us are in the pit. Sammy Merendino, our drummer, is on the 5th floor at the back of the theater, in a room by himself. Neither I, nor the band has any visual contact with him, only audio. My job is to keep the groove with Sammy and help drive the band. Since I've known him for years, I can visualize Sammy playing as if he were in the room with me. It's a very dynamic show, so I want to move with him—be strong and assertive when called for, and quiet and plaintive when it's appropriate. This conveys the proper emotions in the proper places, which is what all music should do.

As a veteran touring and recording musician, what have you found to be the main challenge of a Broadway gig?

Playing eight shows a week and bringing energy and a certain degree of freshness to each and every performance. Fortunately, the quality of the music and the musicians inspires me to stay on point. Also, I can always improve my playing, so I'll concentrate on perfecting my time and my interpretation of the nuances to better myself as the months go on. Whenever I'm feeling tired, I think of the actors onstage and what they do night after night, and I'm reinvigorated because they have the really tough job! **BP**

TOSHI SAKURAI

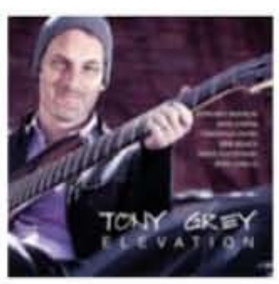
George Duke

BP RECOMMENDS

GEORGE DUKE
DREAMWEAVER [Heads Up]

The unexpected death of keyboard giant George Duke in August shook the music world, with especially heavy reverberation in the bass community. Simply put, as a player/composer/producer/arranger, Duke joins a select few others to have made an indelible mark in both the jazz and pop spheres with names like Cannonball Adderly, Frank Zappa, Miles Davis, Airto and Flora Purim, Michael Jackson, Jeffrey Osborne, Anita Baker, and Jill Scott. That also includes seminal collaborations and solo projects with close friend Stanley Clarke, Alphonso Johnson, Marcus Miller, and Christian McBride, and longtime sidemen Byron Miller, Larry Kimpel, and Michael Manson—as well as album appearances with Earth, Wind & Fire, Tower Of Power, Larry Graham, and Bootsy Collins (not to mention his aura all over Thundercat's *The Golden Age of Apocalypse*).

On his final CD—dedicated to his late wife, Corine—Duke draws from all the styles he mastered with his usual stamp of quality and originality. **Stanley Clarke** anchors and blows on the four-horn acoustic jazz bossa "Stones of Orion," **Michael Manson** drives the funk-rock "Brown Sneakers" with snarling 16ths, and **Larry Kimpel** locks down the universal lyric and harmonic brilliance of "You Never Know." **Christian McBride**, on bass guitar, summons Jaco and James Brown for the let-the-tape-run gathering, "Burnt Sausage Jam," and George himself mans a mean synth bass to dirty up "Ashtray." Godspeed, Sir Duke, and thanks for all the great music! —CHRIS JISI



TONY GREY
ELEVATION [Abstract Logix]

For his fourth solo outing, **Tony Grey**—whose mastery of the 6-string ranges from effortless neck-scaling solo flights to panoramic collages of chordal melodies, loops, and effects—shares the spotlight with seven 6-stringers of another kind: guitarists John McLaughlin, Mike Stern, David Fiuzynski, Reb Beach, Nir Felder, Fabrizio Sotti, and Tomayasu Hotei (aided by the supple stickwork of David Throckmorton on all but one track). McLaughlin, Grey's uncle, arrives early with "Chick's Chums," an angular Rhythm-changes head he wrote for Chick Corea that features the bop-ish blowing of both nephew and uncle. Experimentally charged covers of "Freedom Jazz Dance" and "Solar," and the Eastern-intoned "Floating River Yangtze," feature the unmistakable

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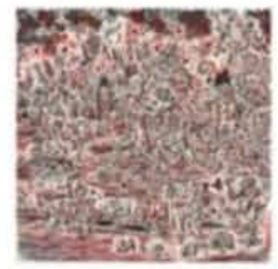
sound and imagination of Fiuzynski on his fretless guitar. Whitesnake's Beach joins Grey for a unison fuze shred on the title track, with each soloing over different changes, while Hotei mines similar metal-edged territory on "Galactic Samurai," which also boasts Grey's most resonant solo. Elsewhere, Nir Felder proves a good sonic and creative match with the bassist on "Guiding Light" and "Dil Chahata Hai," and Grey's most fervent support work occurs behind Stern on "Walking In, Walking Out." With plenty of potential in any of these pairings, let's see where the über-talented Tony turns next. —CHRIS JISI

ELVIS COSTELLO AND THE ROOTS
WISE UP GHOST AND OTHER SONGS [Blue Note]
Proving what happens when old-school hip meets old-school hip-hop, the Roots team up with Elvis Costello on this eclectic and soulful mash-up. Always in the pocket, **Mark Kelley** proves how simplicity can impact a tune, as his tastefully grooving lines pay homage to the James Jamerson school of bass. Songs like "Wake Me Up" and "Sugar Won't Work" illustrate Kelley's uncanny ability to lock in with Questlove's drums and Costello's guitar. —JON D'AURIA

RANDY BRECKER
THE BRECKER BROTHERS BAND REUNION [Piloo]
You always remember your first professional gig, and for **Will Lee**, that was the jazz-funk fusion group Dreams, which in 1971 featured 25-year-old trumpeter Randy Brecker and his younger brother Michael on saxophone. Lee went with Dreams for their 1975 debut, and on this stellar two-disc set (one a live DVD recorded at New York's Blue Note club), he digs once again into the slick funk pocket that defined the Brothers' early sound. Highlights: the hyper-syncopated "First Tune of the Set" and the meditative Michael Brecker tribute "Elegy for Mike." —BILL MURPHY

NINE INCH NAILS
HESITATION MARKS [Null Corporation]
NIN's trademark synth and electronic sounds get a straightforward rock boost on this album courtesy of none other than bass guru **Pino Palladino**. In an unusual collaboration, Palladino splits the bass duties with Autolux's **Eugene Goreshter** and **Trent Reznor** himself. Palladino's unmistakable groove stands out most on "All Time Low," where he locks into the pocket and brings some unexpected funk. Whether it's extreme synth lines or moody bass riffs, this album offers extreme low frequencies in true NIN fashion. —JON D'AURIA

RANDY KLEIN'S TWO DUOS
WHAT'S NEXT?
[Jazzheads]
Pianist-composer Klein alternates between duets with metal/jazz guitarist Alex Skolnick and with **Boris Kozlov**, best known in some circles for being the longtime anchor—on upright, of course—of New York's Mingus Big Band. It's great to hear Kozlov's fluidity on 6-string electric, where he displays masterful technique, great taste, humor, and warm yet clear tone as he and Klein travel through spaces both introspective and rollicking. —E.E. BRADMAN



CASS MCCOMBS
BIG WHEEL AND OTHERS [Domino]
As restless and peripatetic as his music, singer-songwriter Cass McCombs also has a deep Rolodex. On 2011's *Wit's End*, Justin Meldal-Johnsen held down the low end; this time around, Phish's **Mike Gordon** lends his knack for melodic exploration to a grip of songs (including the summery "Morning Star") on this whimsical art-folk outing. Multi-instrumentalist **Jon Shaw** weighs in on the balance, bringing a thick cushion to the spacey ballad "Home on the Range" and the alt-country vamp "Brighter!" —BILL MURPHY

PHILIP SAYCE
STEAMROLLER [Philip Sayce]
On his fourth solo album, blues guitar virtuoso Philip Sayce unveils his most driving work yet, which features the inspired playing of bassist **Joel Gottschalk**. As Sayce blends indie-rock and alternative influences into his writing, Gottschalk follows his every step, supplying deep rhythmic grooves and powerful blues lines with commanding finesse. Gottschalk shines on the uptempo tracks "Black Train" and "A Mystic," where he solidifies his role as the foundation of a dynamic power trio. —JON D'AURIA

AARON GERMAIN
CHANCE [Origin]
On his new album *Chance*, the San Francisco Bay Area's **Aaron Germain** brings his impressive chops to a set of compositions demonstrating his take on jazz, blues, and fusion. Using both electric and upright basses to lead his live band, Germain's lightning-fast licks shine on songs like "Already Not Yet," "Bunk Bread," and "Ginger Skin," but though his showmanship on electric bass often steals the show, his contemplative upright playing on "Chlkurin" reveals Germain's true depth. —JON D'AURIA

KENNY JAMES
INVISIBLEMANN, VOL. 9: GLOBAL FUNKTION
[kennyjamesbassist.com]
On this disc of funky chill-out music, producer/multi-instrumentalist **Kenny James** uses fretted and fretless basses to put the bottom under an old-school mélange of grooves that harks back to the heyday of Massive Attack and Thievery Corporation. James' soulful music has just enough dance, jazz, and R&B flavor to keep things interesting, but the overall vibe is perfect for a Sunday afternoon. Call it kickin' back music for people who like real instruments, real singers, and real bass, high up in the mix. —E.E. BRADMAN

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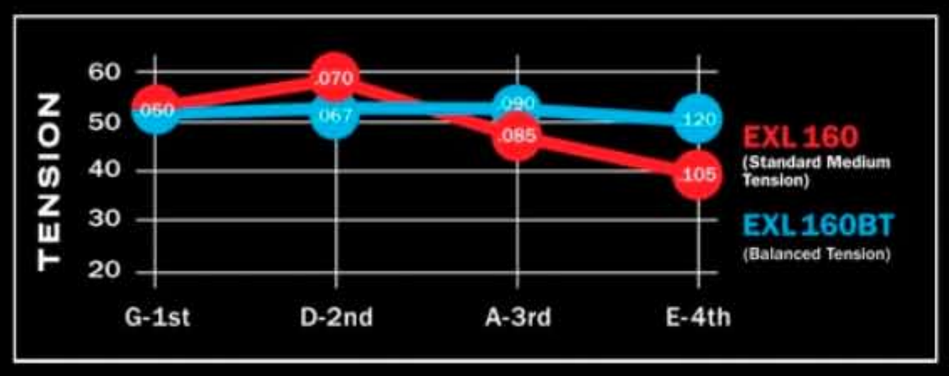

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La Bella's new Rx strings are wound on a hexagonal core to prevent buzzing and enhance intonation, and they boast more flexibility and lighter tension than some of the company's current sets. Rx strings are available in stainless steel and nickel-plated steel, for 4-, 5-, and 6-string models, and for short, medium, standard, and extra-long scales. Each set is available in various combinations of .040–.100 and .045–.105 gauges matched with a .030 *C* string and a .130 *B* string.

Street From $27 (4-string nickel) to $42 (6-string nickels)

Contact labella.com

FENDER
Modern Player Starcaster & Coronado Basses

Fender turns back the clock yet again with two 30"-scale semi-hollowbodies from yesteryear. With its bound *f*-holes, "amp"-style control knobs, Fender Wide Range humbuckers, black-dot inlays, 4-saddle Fender Hi-Mass bridge, and distinctive headstock, the Starcaster proudly proclaims its vintage credentials. Though it shares several of the Starcaster's attributes, the Coronado boasts Fideli'Tron humbuckers, a three-ply black pickguard, and an Adjusto-Matic bridge with floating "F" trapeze tailpiece. The Starcaster is available in natural, black, and aged cherry burst gloss finishes; the Coronado comes in three-color sunburst, black, candy apple red, and black cherry burst gloss finishes.

Street $750

Contact fender.com

KORG
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Korg's 19-inch, single-rackspace tuner operates in three modes: regular (needle in the middle when you're in tune), strobe (LED freezes when you're in tune), and half-strobe (LED stops moving and the middle lights up when you're in tune). Other features include a buffered output, mute, line level input, and a cable checker.

Street $100

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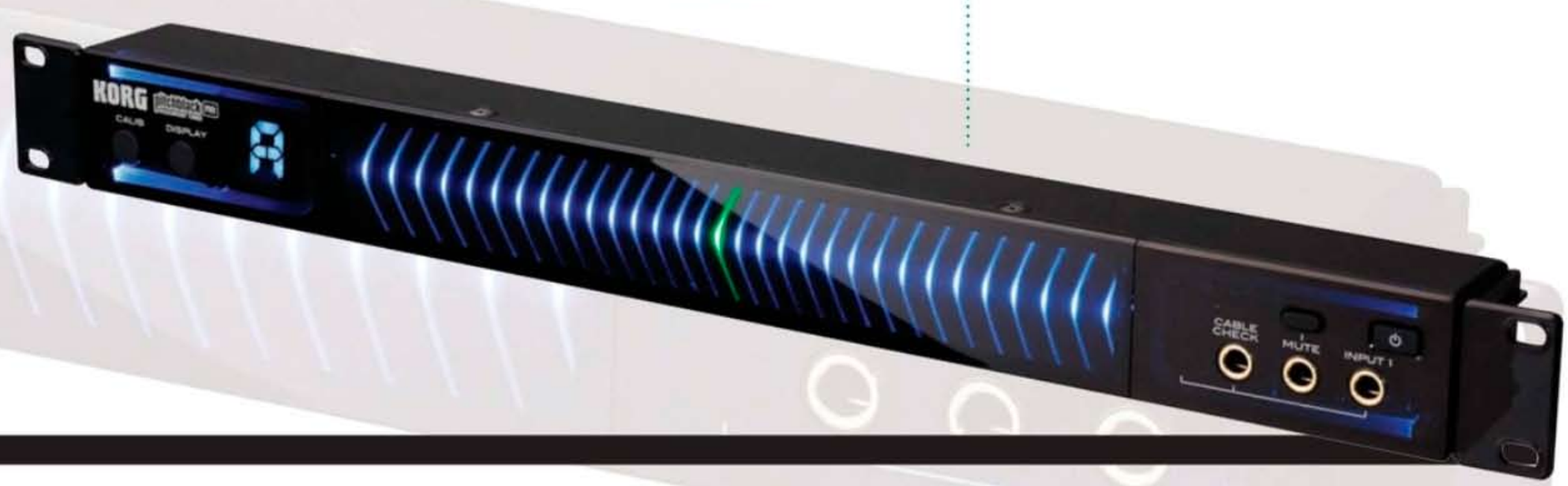

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The latest generation of Elrick's Expat NJS basses features updated pickguards, exclusive Elrick bridges, matching metal knobs, fretboard markers (including block inlays), new colors, and matching headstocks. The 24-fret, 34"-scale 4-strings and 35"-scale 5-strings come with Bartolini J-style pickups, Bartolini 3-band preamps with 2-way mid, and active bypass. Each instrument comes with Hipshot hardware, Straplok-compatible Dunlop strap buttons, Elrick Fundamental strings, and an Elrick Zero Gravity case.

Direct $2,500

Contact Elrick.com

TWA

GD-02 Great Divide Analog Synth Octaver

Drop a little synth mayhem on your bandmates and audiences with TWA's Great Divide, which features five independent voices (octave down, octave up, octave up plus envelope, sub, and synth) for you to tweak and blend. There's also a dry voice, four selectable waveforms for the synth voice, an effects loop to patch in external effects, and 12 Internal controls to adjust various voice parameters.

Direct $400

Contact godlyke.com

CORT

Artisan 20th Anniversary Basses

Cort celebrates its 20th birthday with the Artisan A Custom 20th and the Artisan B 20th. The neck-through A Custom 20th boasts a bubinga, maple, and African wenge body and neck, an Indian rosewood fingerboard, Bartolini Custom MK-4CBC pickups, and a Bartolini HR5.4AP preamp. The swamp ash Artisan B 20th sports a bolt-on African wenge and rosewood neck with an African wenge fingerboard, as well as a Bartolini preamp and MK-1 pickups.

Street $800 (Artisan A4 and B4); $850 (Artisan A5 and B5)

Contact cortguitars.com

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Mooer's cute little Micro DI is small enough to fit in your back pocket but packed enough to take to a gig. Besides the basics—a ¼" instrument input, a balanced XLR output, an unbalanced ¼" output, and a ground lift switch—the 1.5" x 3.5" DI offers players the option of adjusting the input signal with -20dB, 0dB, +20dB settings, and there's also a virtual cabinet emulator that simulates the sound of a 4x12 cab.

Street $90

Contact mooeraudio.com

Royal

Johnny Christ & Avenged Sevenfold pay tribute to a pantheon of rock gods on Hail to the King.

"So, who are your influences?" It's a question that reads so platitudinous in music magazines that it feels hackneyed no matter how cleverly disguised. Fortunately, one needn't even ask Johnny Christ of Avenged Sevenfold. A quick spin through the ten tracks of Hail to the King, his band's sixth album, leaves little to the imagination. The album plays like a joyride through the hard rock airwaves circa '91, as reverberations of Duff McKagan and Rex Brown rattle the chassis and reflections of Cliff Burton flicker like flares in the rearview.

By Brian Fox

Photograph by Justin Boruki

Bauta

BRIAN HEINLEIN/RETNA

The band as taken lumps for wearing its influences on its tattooed sleeves, with Machine Head frontman Robb Flynn going so far as to satirically congratulate the band on its successful "covers album." Haters will hate, but there's a whole lot to love about *Hail to the King*, which marks a new stage for a band that got its start as a Southern California metalcore outfit and has grown into one of the biggest hard rock acts on the planet. For his part, Christ parades his influences loudly and proudly, taking as much pride in shaping his own tone as he does in meticulously crafting "just-right" bass lines in the molds of his heroes.

There are a few moments on the new album when the bass really jumps out, but that's clearly not your highest priority. Many of your peers would agree that's the measure of a proper bass player.

Thank you for saying so. Especially when you're talking heavy metal and hard rock, that's where the bass needs to be—locking down with the groove most of the time. There are moments to show you can *play*—or, more importantly, to accentuate a part of a song.

Whether it's bass or any other instrument, I want to orchestrate parts so you could hear the song a million times without But

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stepping all over the vibe of a song just to say, "I'm still here" is just not my M.O. these days.

In the AX7 setting, how do you go about dialing in your sound?

At first, I was going about it wrong, looking for lots of low end—more felt than heard. When we started working with [producer] Mike Elizondo on *Nightmare*, I played a lot of Rickenbackers and P-Basses. Those basses have a lot of low midrange, and that really helps hold it down—the bass blends well with the kick drum, and at the same time it adds a really cool texture to the guitars. So, upper bass and lower midrange frequencies have become really important for me. In this kind of setting, the guitars are going to sound the way they sound. But take the bass out and they're not going to sound right. I'm basically looking for the best way to maximize the impact of the guitars.

How has your playing technique changed over time?

When I started with Avenged Sevenfold, some of my favorite bass sounds came from Duff McKagan. He played with a pick, so I started doing the same. On our earlier records, there was a progressive element in our songs, and the pick gave my tone the slice and presence I wanted. I also grew up listening to [fingerstyle players] Steve Harris and Robert Trujillo. Being on tour and seeing those guys actually play made me think, Okay, I'm kind of cheating here. So I started to develop that side of my playing. Now I play either with a pick or with my fingers, depending on the sound I want. On this record, "Heretic" is a song that seemed to want a dirtier type of bass tone, so I used a pick on that. I've played with a pick since I was 12 years old, so it's been an accomplishment in itself to start turning myself into a fingerstyle player. Overall, I feel like playing with my fingers gives me more control over notes.

Whether it's with my fingers or a pick, I like to attack the bass as hard as I can. I've always loved the percussive sound of the strings on a bass guitar, when it sounds like something slamming against a metal wall. That' something I've always gone for. Over the years, I've tried different ways to get there. It's like anyone else: "I really like that sound. How do I get there? How do I get there?" Just now on this record, I've become extremely happy with the tones I've been seeking for a long time.

For years you played Ernie Ball Music Man StingRay Basses, but now you have a new signature Schecter bass. How did that come about?

I played StingRays for years—they're awesome basses, and the company was great to me. I just wanted to change things up and develop my own signature bass. We talked about doing something together, but they wanted to stay true to what they were doing. More power to them—the brand has been around a long time, and it's obviously working for them.

When I played the P-Basses and Rickenbackers on *Nightmare*, I felt like that was getting closer to the tone I want to get. I wanted the percussive low end of a StingRay humbucker blended with the classic P-Bass clunk and Rickenbacker growl. For six months, Schecter and I went through six or seven different pickup combinations before finally trying an EMG 81 guitar pickup in the neck position. When we tried it, we knew we had what I was looking

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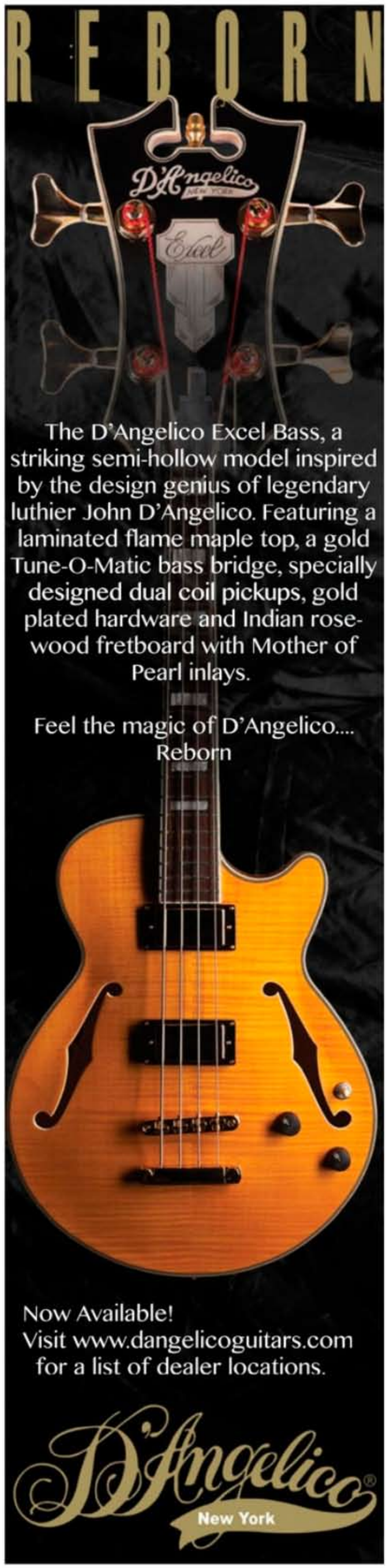

for. With a blend knob to roll from one pickup to the next, the bass has a really broad sound, from pianistic clarity to distorted growl. Right up the middle gets the sound I generally want. After 60 years of the electric bass, so much of it is all the same; it's cool to be pushing some boundaries and trying new things.

The body and headstock style strikes me as a nod to the Rickenbacker aesthetic.

I went to a design company and said, "I want something that looks metal, but classic metal." I didn't want it to look cheesy. I definitely took some inspiration from the Rickenbacker headstock, because you look at that bass and you know it's an amazing piece of equipment. Just like with our band's music, I wear my inspiration on my sleeve.

In a recent interview, [AX7 vocalist]M. Shadows characterized the new album as "an Avenged Sevenfold album from the early '90s and late '80s." Do you feel that way from a bass perspective?

Yeah, absolutely. Late-'80s, and early-'90s metal—early Metallica, Pantera—is what I grew up with. I would even go further back than that, to Iron Maiden. Listening to Steve Harris in the late '70s and early '80s, it's inspiring to hear a heavy metal band that has all the great guitar work, but also incorporates this amazing bass playing. That's something that I've always wanted to do. When a song calls for it, I'm ready to do it. Once again, Rex Brown and Duff McKagan are big influences on me. Cliff Burton is probably the biggest. That was a whole new direction of bass playing at the time. Sonically, that era of music had a lot going on; if you tune in, you can hear what every single instrument is doing, but when you sit back, it's just all so heavy and molded perfectly together.

How did you write your bass parts on *Hail to the King*?

This time around, we were writing every day for nine months straight, and there wasn't a whole lot of time for me to work specifically on my bass lines; I was more focused working on the songs. About a month before we started pre-production was when I started messing around with bass lines. But the whole time I was thinking in my head, I'm going to write out a few stylistic choices, but at the end of the day I want to get into the studio with a clear head on each song and really feel the vibe of how it's being laid down—how the drums are coming together with the guitar, and how everything is just getting pieced together. Then I'd hone in what needed to happen on bass.

Do you find mid-tempo songs like "Crimson Day" particularly challenging?

When I was demoing that song out, I was playing somewhat busy stuff. I thought it could be cool if it had a '90s rock ballad kind of feel, and that maybe I could get away with doing some classic Duff-style lines, like what he'd do "November Rain" or "Don't Cry." When the song started to really come together, I was playing lines I had messing around with, and before anyone else even said anything, I realize it wasn't going to work for that song. So I just dropped back, listened to the kick and snare, and tried to just be present in the sonic range and not so much 'that's the bass doing that'—just keep it on line. As the song builds through the bridge, I felt like there was some open space, so I played some runs to give it a bit of an angelic kind of feel.

"Heretic" stands out for its gnarly tone.

There, we went heavy on the EMG 81 pickup. It just needed to sound seedy and dirty. It was a combination of four things: playing with a pick, really clanking into it, turning toward the neck pickup, turning up the distortion channel. Each

INFO

LISTEN

Avenged Sevenfold (on Warner Bros., except where noted), *Hail to the King*, [2013]; *Nightmare* [2010]; *Avenged Sevenfold* [2007]; *City of Evil* [2005]; *Waking the Fallen* [Hopeless, 2003]; *Sounding the Seventh Trumpet* [Hopeless, 2001]

EQUIP

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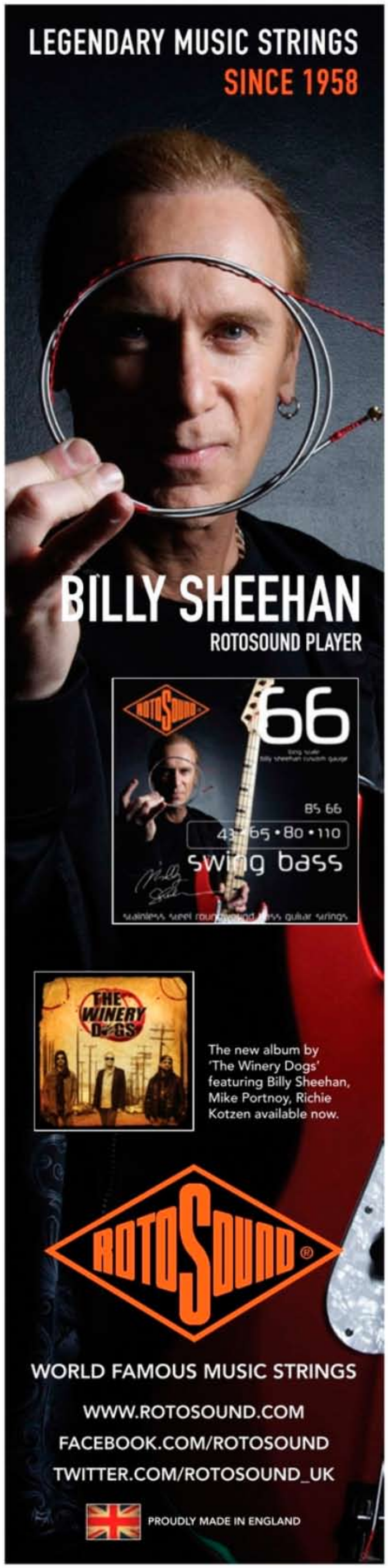

was a subtle change in and of itself, but all of them together really brought out the sonic value of what we were going for.

When you're playing with a pick, where are you connecting with the strings?

I go pretty much between the backside of the humbucker and the front side of the bridge. I'm not keeping my hand in one place at all times—I like to feel it out.

Where's your go-to fingerstyle spot?

I typically go right over the humbucker. I rest my thumb on the top left corner of the humbucker and let the fingers fall where they are after that.

What rigs did you record with?

We had a DI for everything, but we also used my Gallien-Krueger 2001 RB head into an Ampeg 4x10 cab they had at the studio. We did a kind of blind taste test with combinations of cabinets, and that one was consistently good.

What's your live rig?

I've been using the G-K 2001 RB forever. For me, it has the best distortion channel out there. I'll run through the 2001 RB's distortion channel, I'll send another signal to a clean Gallien-Krueger head, and I'll send them each to an 8x10 cab. My stage volume is a little obnoxious. [*Laughs.*] For my clean channel, I just started playing G-K's Fusion 550 head, a solid-state amp with a tube preamp. I thought it was going to sound warm and awesome, and it did. I've also been playing through the new Gallien-Krueger Neo 810 cabinets, which are unbelievable. I'm super happy with my live rig now.

Do you have a string preference?

Six months before we went into the studio, Ernie Ball sent me a pack of their Cobalt strings to try out. I wasn't looking to change, but when I tried them, they had a metallic sheen that was very cool. So I've switched to playing Cobalts.

Is there anything else in your signal chain?

There's nothing constant, but there are moments on some songs where I'll bring a chorus pedal in. Right now I'm using the H2O chorus pedal, and occasionally a Dunlop Crybaby Bass Wah. Our style is straightforward heavy metal and heavy rock, so I don't get too into bass effects. But every once in a while, it's cool to through in a chorus. It's also another ode to Duff.

When we last spoke, the band had just begun playing with drummer Arin Ilejay. I wonder if you could tell me about your evolution as a rhythm section since then.

He really lays into the pocket perfectly. We've evolved together—on parts of the new record, for instance, I really understand where he's going to go with his hit patterns and lock in with that. But overall, it hasn't been too much of a transition. He plays the songs the way they're supposed to be played, and it makes my job a lot easier to lock in with him.

Between Arin, Mike Portnoy, and Jimmy "the Rev" Sullivan, the band has had some heavy hitters behind the kit. How have each of them differed from your perspective in terms of how a groove sits.

The Rev basically taught me how to fit in the pocket. He was my mentor; he taught me a lot, and I learned just jamming with him. We became right in sync with each other over the years. I still very much play that style that Jimmy taught me to play.

With working with Mike was great. When we went in to do *Nightmare,* he listened very closely to the demos that Jimmy had already recorded and stayed very true to them, but he had a slightly different feel. Jimmy listened to a lot of funk and jazz, and he was able to lay back a little bit more. Mike was a little more metal and progressive, but he definitely had all the chops to make it happen.

Arin grew up playing in church, so he has a lot of that gospel feel. We've taught him about the style that we're going for as a band, and he's picked it up in stride—he's killing it. Every drummer has a slightly different feel, but Arin lays into the groove and sits just a hair behind the beat. It's really allows us to lock in, especially on these new songs. When we're playing live and have adrenaline going, it can be hard to lay back on a song that might require it. But we've been doing this for so long, it doesn't take long for all of us to come together.

In many ways, yes. When I joined the band, I was the new kid, and I didn't fully understand the songwriting aspect to playing bass—I just wanted to get in there and throw bass lick riffs around whether or not they made sense for the song. Now, I have a better understanding of the songwriting process, and I understand how too work as a band. I've definitely evolved to where I orchestrate my bass lines rather than throw down a bunch of riffs. As with other things, when you practice your craft as often as you can, it eventually starts to get better. I'm still proud of the work I've done in the past, but I feel that I'm maturing with each album, honing in and synching into the groove. I love playing, so I'm always trying to do things a little bit better. **BP**

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Living in RHYTHM

After working as a **bassist, composer, scorer, and producer** for some of the biggest artists in hip-hop and R&B, **DERRICK HODGE** merges his many talents for an album of his own.

BY JON D'AURIA | PHOTOS BY CHRIS BALDWIN

WHEN DERRICK HODGE SET OUT TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS A MUSICIAN in Philadelphia, he knew that he never wanted to limit his scope to mastering just one thing. Rather than focus solely on electric bass, Hodge also picked up upright and keyboard bass at a young age. Instead of developing a repertoire based around his ample gospel chops, he studied jazz and classical composition while playing lots of R&B and hip-hop. And instead of limiting himself to being a gigging musician, he quickly established himself as a producer, composer, scorer, and session ace. In fact, Hodge's penchant for variety and his unbending drive to succeed have been the keys to his success since day one.

A true student of the bass and the players before him, Hodge cut his teeth playing in the West Philadelphia church scene in elementary school and then joined his high school orchestra, where he began playing upright. At Temple University, where he focused on jazz composition and performance, he had the rare opportunity to learn from John Clayton, Christian McBride, and Victor Wooten through honors programs. Once he graduated, it didn't take long for Hodge to begin working with artists such as Common, Q-Tip, Kanye West, Timbaland, Jill Scott, Anthony Hamilton, and Mos Def, as well as scoring movies and documentaries, including Spike Lee's 2006 film *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts*.

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But despite all of his success, Hodge had one project that he had been waiting his whole life to complete, which he recently accomplished by releasing his first solo album, *Live Today*. As expected, Hodge brings his deep knowledge of jazz, gospel, hip-hop, and R&B to life in a personal fashion that makes the listener feel as if they're experiencing an aural autobiography of his life in music. Beautiful compositions like "Message of Hope" and "Solitude" contrast head-nodding grooves such as the title track (featuring Common) and "Gritty Folk." Showcasing his electric, upright, and synth prowess with every track, while also assuming the role of producer and composer, Hodge proves that there's truly no task too big for him.

What was the inspiration behind *Live Today*?

This album is a product of the decision that I made to not wait for the perfect day, for the stars to align, or for a sign to fall from the sky; it was all about doing this now. People have been following me through my whole career, so I wanted to give them something very honest from me that's raw and exposed in its core. After that decision, things just worked out as if life were testing me and pushing me to see if I really wanted to do this.

What were your goals for your tone on this album?

I wanted to use the same signal path that I always do. I can tend to be a "gear slut" in the studio, but I wanted this to mimic how people would experience listening to me alone in my practice room playing. I had my Aguilar amp in there and I went through good DIs and a Neve board and played my CallowHill bass. I always make sure that things are tracked really well through the initial signal path so that there is less work and more possibilities in the mixing stages.

Did you orchestrate the album around your bass?

It's more of a concept album for me in an artistic-statement kind of way that isn't limited to the instrument that I play. Some songs feature bass, and others don't. More than anything, I wanted people to catch a little of my spirit as a producer, composer, and player. You don't have to focus on bass at all to do that.

What techniques did you use?

This record was tracked over a long period. Some sessions came after long practice sessions where I probably played a little livelier, playing the full range of the instrument. On a song like "Night Vision," I tried to highlight the bass by putting a little tapping and slapping on it; I just moved through a lot of variations where I dug in toward the bridge. On "Solitude," I played my fretless and raised the action so it made me really dig in. That lends the feeling of really having to fight to get each note across.

Does your role as a producer influence how you approach bass?

Absolutely. At its core this album is not over-produced. I didn't want to over-polish or over-hype anything just to make people nod their heads. So that's kind of a producer's mentality that I took into it. For each song, I wanted to put myself into a position to just let it go and see what happened naturally. To do that, I brought on other musicians who had the producer mentality, like Robert Glasper, James Poyser, Keyon Harrold, Mark Colenburg; the list goes on. They're all producers in their own rights, and they all have respect for song form.

When did you first begin playing bass?

I was seven years old when I started playing guitar, because the bass was too big for me. I always wanted to play bass from day one, though. I wanted to play ever since I started watching the bass players at my church. So I started playing electric bass in my elementary school orchestra. Really, I'm a product of the school system. I started playing upright in middle school because they could actually afford to buy one. I played it—self-taught—through high

INFO

LISTEN

Derrick Hodge, *Live Today* [Blue Note, 2013]

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Rig Aguilar AG 500SC, Aguilar DB 751, Aguilar GS 410, Aguilar DB 410

Effects Aguilar Tone Hammer, Aguilar Octamizer

Strings Sadowsky Roundwound Nickel & Stainless

2001RB
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Johnny Christ
Avenged Sevenfold

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school, but when I got to college, I had to relearn it from scratch. The upright is no joke! It was kind of a rebirth when I got into college. I've been playing synth bass since I was a teenager because so many people around me did multiple things in music, so I always had the mentality that I had to do multiple things.

How does your playing differ from electric to upright?

When it comes to performance and creativity, I try to not approach either one with any preconceived notions. I go into every situation with an open palette and I let the song dictate itself. Sometimes I play the electric like an acoustic, and sometimes I play the acoustic like an electric. That gives a cool James Jamerson feel. The only time I really separate those instruments at their core is when I'm practicing. In the practice room, I dig down and study the history of each instrument and really pay respect to each instrument as is.

What is your ideal bass tone?

Generally speaking, there was a time when I focused on that a little more, but now I like amps that don't give me the option to manipulate my tone as much. That's what I like about the Aguilar heads that I'm using; it's like an old SVT that offers pretty much just bass, treble, and highs to adjust. I actually don't like too much high end on my tone; I keep that part turned down quite a bit, and if I want that extra bite I use my fingers to make it cut really nice. I like relying on the attack on the strings for my high end. The only thing I change is the pickup switches on my bass—I'll literally be changing that throughout a whole song to dial it in.

How do you approach scoring a film such as Spike Lee's *When the Levees Broke*?

It depends on what it is I'm writing for and the expectation of the director. If they give me free rein to compose as I feel, then I walk into it with an open mind. I read the script and then I look at the footage, and I rely on what everything is telling me and what my senses are telling me about the spirit of what the project is. I look at how people are talking; I watch their cadence and breath and see if somebody leaves space when they read a line, and I know I can fill it more with melodic phrases. If somebody talks faster or has a long train of thoughts, then I'll write something lusher that stays out of their way. I immerse myself into the project and write whatever the film calls for.

You've had some amazing mentors throughout your musical upbringing.

I've studied a lot of bass players from afar, but I did get the luxury of studying personally with some amazing bass players in my middle years. A few guys I have to mention are Vince Fay, who was my professor at Temple University; he let me get away with everything, and he encouraged me to become a sponge while I was in college. From there I went on to learning from Christian McBride and Victor Wooten, and they taught me so much that changed my playing forever. And I have to mention the great John Clayton. He took me under his wing and is one of the greatest teachers I've ever had. He's truly a master of his instrument. I also got to study with Ron Carter, which was a huge honor. My best friend Thaddaeus Tribbett influenced me greatly, too.

How have you evolved as a player?

At this point I'm more a product of my experience. I've started becoming surprised listening back to things I've done, hearing my influences come out in my playing. You can listen to how my experiences have formed my playing on any given song. In terms of actual approach, that hasn't changed much in the last ten years. I got rid of some naiveté, but still I hold on to some of it. But I try to go into every new musical experience with an open palette. Like Common said on "Be," "I'm never looking back, or too far in front of me. The present is a gift, and I just want to be." **BP**

Warwick Bass Camp Professors (from top left): Wolfgang Schmid, Victor Wooten, John Patitucci, Jonas Hellborg, Steve Bailey, Leland Sklar, Günther Gebauer, Ove Bosch, Victor Brandt, Dick Lövgren, John B. Williams; Regi Wooten, Antonella Mazza, Alphonso Johnson, Andy Irvine, Stuart Hamm, Hellmut Hattler.

HAPPY CAMPERS

Top-Notch Profs & Students Converge At Warwick Bass Camp 2013

BY BRIAN FOX | PHOTOS COURTESY WARWICK

IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER, 17 WORLD-CLASS BASS players from throughout Europe and the United States arrived in the hamlet of Markneukirchen, Germany, for the second annual Warwick Bass Camp, presented in partnership with German-language magazine *Gitarre & Bass*. For four days of clinics held in and around the state-of-the-art Warwick factory, camp professors Victor Wooten, John Patitucci, Alphonso Johnson, Leland Sklar, Jonas Hellborg, Steve Bailey, Stuart Hamm, and others joined 84 campers in an immersive experience that included long days in the classrooms and epic nights of after-hours jams that often paired profs with their students. The week-long camp culminated in Warwick's annual Open Day, in which the factory opens its doors to the surrounding community for a day of free live music, factory tours, and meet-and-greets with artists that this year included Ryan Martinie, Jeroen Paul Thesseling, Evan Brewer, Divinity Roxx, Guy Pratt, T.M. Stevens, and Nick Schendzielos. Registration has begun for next years Warwick Bass Camp, which will run from September 1–6, 2014. For more information, head to warwick.de.

Steve Bailey offers cautionary advice to those who identify themselves as "solo bassists."

Stuart Hamm illustrates facets of his signature style.

Reflecting on the thousands of sessions he's played on, Leland Sklar lays out the practices and approaches that make him a first-call player.

Dick Lövgren breaks down some of the across-the-bar rhythm complexity he employs with Meshuggah and Angry Loner.

Splitting the classroom into two halves, Alphonso Johnson calls on individual students to create on-the-spot call-and-response bass lines to emphasize the importance of listening.

Hellmut Hattler shows some of the techniques that make him one of the fiercest pickstyle players on either side of the pond.

John Patitucci discusses how his love for and devotion to both electric and upright bass has led down parallel paths.

In discussing the language of music, Victor Wooten emphasizes the importance of phrasing.

After a long day in the classroom, Bass Camp students cut loose in after-hours jams that often included camp professors.

The epitome of cool, John B. Williams shares some of the experiences he's had in his long career.

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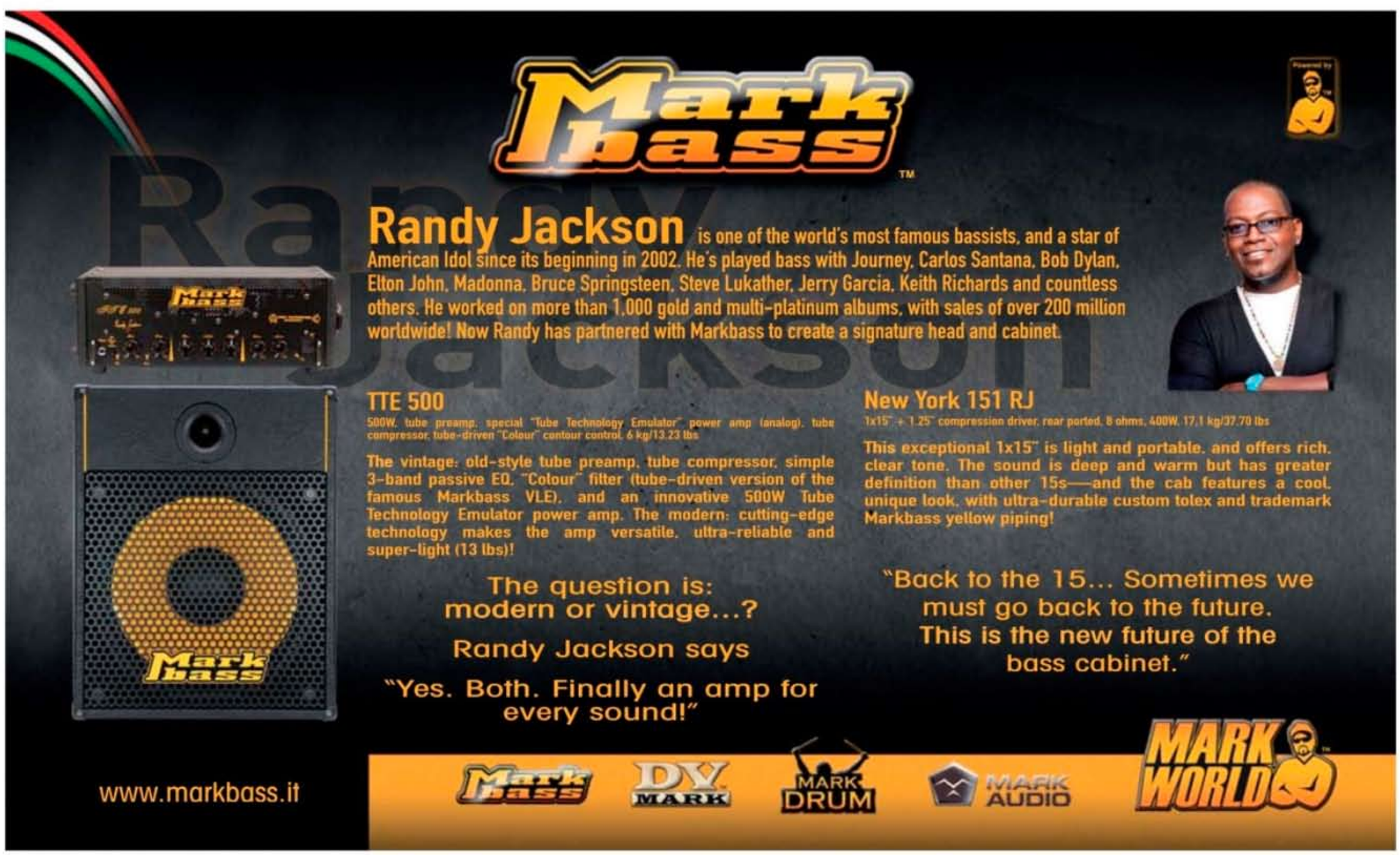
Regi Wooten challenges the class to dig deeper into the meaning of music, beyond what is taught in classroom.

Ove Bosch emphasizes the importance of string muting with both right- and left-hand techniques.

Who are you? **Jonas Hellborg** challenges students to examine their own strengths and weaknesses as players.



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SOUNDROOM

Fender Deluxe & American Deluxe Dimension Basses

BY BRIAN FOX

YES, WE ALL CAN AGREE THAT LEO FENDER GOT it right the first time in 1951 with the Fender Precision Bass. And the second time in 1961with the Fender Jazz Bass. And the third time in 1976 with the Music Man StingRay. And the fourth time in 1980 with G&L's L-series basses. Leo's bass legacy is undeniable, and we are fortunate to still pick fruit from three vital branches the Leo Fender family tree: Fender, Ernie Ball Music Man, and G&L. While each of those companies could brainlessly bank their futures on Leo's designs of decades past, it's heartening to see each reach into the modern age with fresh designs for the times.

For Fender's part, much of the company's innovation has come through offering Precision and Jazz Basses—some, slightly modified—in a range of trim packages and at various

American Deluxe Dimension Bass IV

American Deluxe Dimension Bass IV HH

price points. The company is now throwing its weight behind an entirely new bass, the Dimension Bass. Not to be confused with the Modern Player Dimension Basses released a few years ago, the new American Deluxe Dimension Bass comes in four models: 4-string or 5-string with either single or twin humbuckers (HH). The Deluxe Dimension Bass is available in 4- or 5-string configurations, both with a single bridge-position humbucker.

To call the Dimension Bass revolutionary would surely be overstating things; from its headstock to its Hi-Mass bridge, the Dimension bears a lot in common with its Fender brothers and younger cousins. But with a slightly offset body shape that

SPECIFICATIONS

FENDER

AMERICAN DELUXE DIMENSION BASSES
Street 4-string, $1,600–$1,700; 5-string, $1,700–$1,800
Pros 5-position pickup switch (on HH) and 3-band EQ offer loads of tone sculpting options.
Cons None

DELUXE DIMENSION BASSES
Street 4-string, $750; 5-string, $800
Pros Offers much of the tonal versatility of the American Deluxe Dimension for a fraction of the price.
Cons None

Contact fender.com

SPECS

DELUXE & AMERICAN DELUXE DIMENSION BASSES
Construction Bolt-on
Body Ash
Neck Maple
Fingerboard Rosewood
Pickups Fender Fathead humbuckers
Controls Volume, 5-way pickup selector (HH models), treble (+10dB @ 10kHZ, -12dB @ 12kHz), midrange (+8dB/-7dB @ 650Hz), bass (+7/-10dB @ 40Hz)
Made in Deluxe, Mexico; American Deluxe, U.S.A

American Deluxe Dimension Bass V

Deluxe Dimension Bass V

feels like a cross between a Jazz and a StingRay, compound-radius fingerboards (on the American Deluxe), and newly designed Fender Fathead humbucking pickups, the Dimension certainly occupies its own plane in the Fender universe.

Spending the bulk of my time with the American Deluxe IV HH, it took mere moments to get with the Dimensions comfortable shape and distinctly Fender feel. Unplugged, the Dimension has all the snap and resonance I love in an ash-body bolt-on. Plugged in, the Dimension really begins to separate itself from the traditional Fender pack. I was all but befuddled by the array of tones at my fingertips. Not unlike the Ernie Ball Music Man Sabre we recently reviewed [October 2013], the Dimension HH boast a 5-way pickup selector switch with the following options, back to front: neck pickup; both pickups, outer coils; both pickups, humbucking, both pickups, inner coils; neck pickup. With that variety of sounds, paired with a potent onboard 3-band EQ, the Dimension is nothing if not flexible.

The Dimension's new Fathead pickup is unique in its construction; rather than utilizing a single pole piece for each string, the Fathead in fact employs two poles that are connected at the top to create a horseshoe shape intended to create a wide but focused magnetic field for increased low-end punch. In humbucking mode, the high-output pickups pump out a fat fundamental with a balanced top end. Single-coil operation attenuates some of the low-end boom, and gives the bass a smaller, more focused sonic footprint.

For players who perhaps don't want or need the vast sonic range of the Dimension HH, the single pickup Dimension Bass offers charms that shouldn't be overlooked. With its single humbucker placed in a StingRay-like position, a sonic parallel to Leo's latter-day design is perhaps unavoidable. But with their slimmer, more shallow neck and unique body profiles, the single-pickup Dimension Basses have a feel that's all their own.

Both the Deluxe and American Deluxe Dimension Basses are available in 5-string; the American Deluxe V comes with either pickup configuration, while the Deluxe V comes with a single bridge humbucker. Both tester Vs played beautifully, and had taut *B* strings that spoke clearly through the burly-sounding Fatheads.

Whether its the sparkle and growl of a Jazz, the grunt of a Precision, the scooped goodness of a StingRay, or the power and punch of an L-2000, each of these iconic basses has a signature sound that speaks to some, if not all. Though it's impossible to wrap the sounds of all into a single bass, the Dimension at least takes one step closer. For that, it is deserving of a Bass Player Editor Award. **BP**

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Darkglass Electronics
Vintage Microtubes

BY MICHAEL MOLENDA

EMBRACING PLANETARY COLLABORATION, Finland's Darkglass Electronics does a neat trick of designing the company's pedals in Helsinki, but has them handmade in the United States by Seattle's 3Leaf Audio. The Vintage Microtubes is definitely a "vintage"-styled overdrive pedal for bass, but there are no tubes in the equation—just crafty emulations of amp overdrive, tape compression, and mic-preamp coloration. But while disciples of '70s, '80s, and '90s bass grit will absolutely find a lot to like about the Vintage Microtubes, the pedal offers more than just a trip back in time. For example, a little edge and gronk can help a bass line drive a track a bit more aggressively. Overdrive can also help the bass blend with distorted guitars, or add vibe and impact to a song that seems rather lifeless. These are just a few situations where the application of overdrive can render low-end sonics that enhance a work of *any* style.

CONSTRUCTION

The Vintage Microtubes comes gig ready in a UFC-tough, brushed aluminum casing. The footswitch—which employs 3Leaf's true-bypass, soft-touch relay—is near military grade, and it effortlessly clicks on and off with no glitches or noise. The Blend, Era, Level, and Drive knobs are big and turn smoothly, although they are positioned so close together that you can inadvertently move one of the top knobs while you're tweaking one of the bottom ones. The pedal requires a 9-volt adapter for operation. That's actually a benefit in my book, but the 9-volt jack is placed very low on the bottom right of the pedal, which can mean the power cable may bunch up towards the lip of your pedalboard.

SOUND

Vintage is definitely spoken here, but the Drive, Blend, and Era knobs let you dial in a ton of tones that just about cover rock, blues, funk, and dance styles from the Beatles to Daft Punk. The fun is in finding the sounds that evoke those eras for you, because the Era knob is cagily "un"-labeled. You can assume the left-knob positions are earlier, and the right-knob positions later—and you'd probably be right—but even that doesn't begin to detail the subtle variations you can craft by auditioning different Blend, Era, and Drive levels. What you'll definitely find by spinning the knobs are these sonic jewels: a fat, '60s-style compression that evokes vintage Urei and LA2A units, a frizzy buzz that simulates overdriving, say, the mic preamp on an old Trident mixing console; stunning, amp-like mid-range grit (think Ampeg SVT rumbling on a wood stage); and near-distortion with frayed lows and smeared mids.

Adding to the coolness is that you can tweak the Blend to completely pummel your bass tone with processed madness, or just sneak in a taste of overdrive to a predominantly clean low end. There's almost no end to the versatility of the Vintage Microtubes, and, furthermore, the pedal's Level knob has enough volume on tap to send your bass solos and/or signature riffs right over the top of the mix.

If you love experimenting with different overdrive characteristics, you could slap down the bucks to work in a recording studio populated with racks of vintage signal processors. Or you could borrow every compression, preamp, and overdrive plug-in you can get your hands on. Or you could plug in a Vintage Microtubes and be done with it. **BP**

SPECIFICATIONS

DARKGLASS ELECTRONICS

VINTAGE MICROTUBES
Street $250
Pros Accurately emulates tape compression, old-school console preamp drive, and amp overdrive
Cons None

Bottom line A no-fuss option for crafting versatile overdrive tones.

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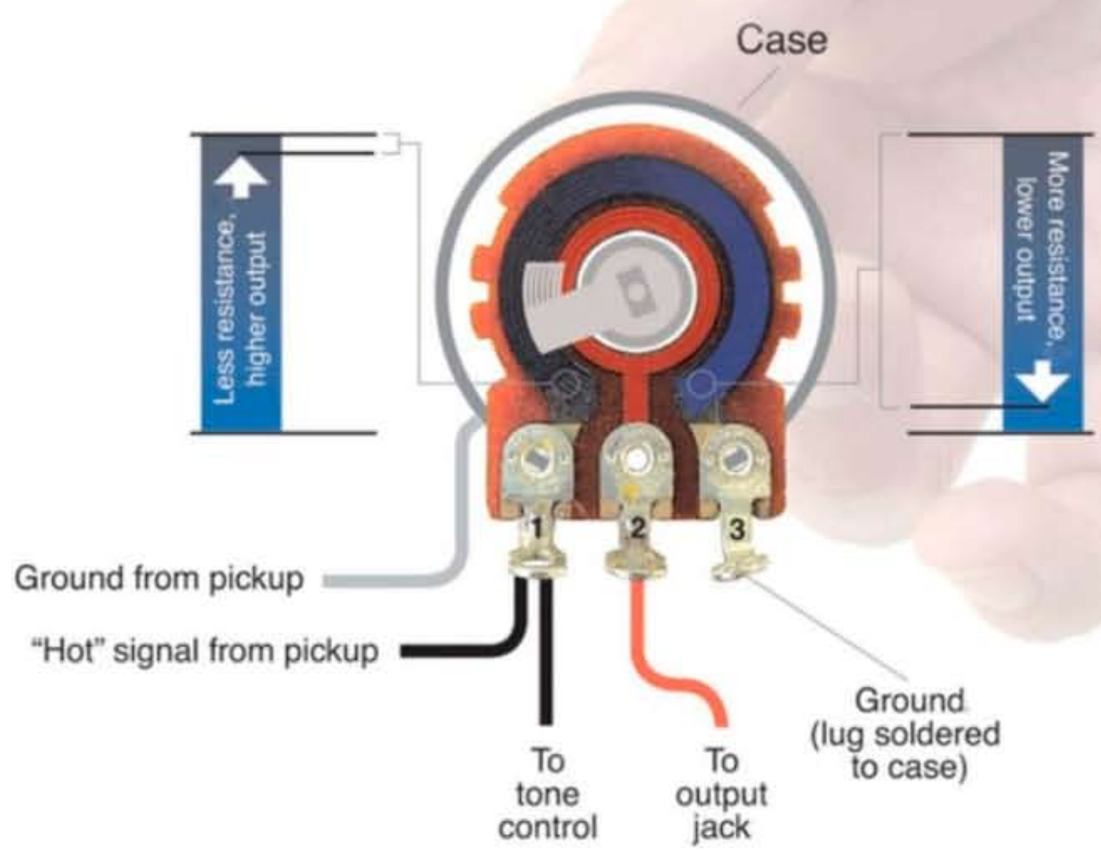

Pot Mechanics: Moving the wiper farther from the "hot" side of the circuit increases the resisitance between lugs 1 and 2 and lowers the resisitance between lugs 2 and 3. The additional resistance between lugs 1 and 2 lowers the output.

MOD SQUAD

Potent Pot Mod

BY ED FRIEDLAND

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF REASONABLY BUILT, attractively finished import basses on the market these days, and for as little as $180, you can buy something you might actually enjoy playing. While these predominantly Asian imports can serve as a great starter bass (or even a "hazardous duty" axe for a pro), for some it is impossible to resist the pull of Turd Polishing Syndrome. "Oh man, this bass would be *so* much cooler with Nordstrand Pickups and a Mike Pope preamp!" they think. "And then I'll get a Babicz bridge, Gotoh tuners, and refinish it in seafoam green."

The primary indicator of T.P.S. is the subject's belief that modifying a $180 bass with $820 worth of parts will somehow create a $1,000 instrument. Many folks happily play their creations for years; in fact, the number of online mega-threads dedicated to the humble Chinese "SX" (Essex) brand staggers the mind. But for some, this process leads to the inevitable "walk of shame" terminating in the FOR SALE section, where the gritty reality of T.P.S. is learned: There is no recouping. Of course, for the modder-in-training, import basses are a great platform for experimentation, and in many cases simple, inexpensive mods can produce big improvements in overall performance. Before you drop $400 on new pickups, one of the least expensive ways to improve the sound of a cheapo is to upgrade the potentiometers, otherwise known as "pots."

POT STRAINS

A standard passive bass routes the signal from the pickup(s) to the volume pot, to the tone pot, and then to the output jack. What is found under the hood of a stock P-Bass looks so simple, it inspires even electronically challenged folks like myself to give it the old DIY try. While not hard to wire up correctly, there are some factors that could make swapping your pots a pot-ential nightmare. For starters, there are two types of pot commonly employed: *linear taper* and *audio taper* (sometimes called a logarithmic, or "log" pot). For general purposes, you'll want audio taper, as it produces a smoother and more musical sweep from "0 to 10." A linear pot will reach what sounds like full value abruptly—from "0 to 3," for example, and you'll hear little change for the rest of the sweep. However, this characteristic can be useful in other circumstances (below).

POT VALUES

Pots come in different values, usually expressed in kilohms (kΩ, sometimes just read as "K"), a measure of resistance. A pot's

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resistance affects the total load of the circuit in your bass, influencing the tone in somewhat predictable ways. As you increase the resistance of the pot (and so, the entire circuit), the bandwidth increases as well, accentuating high frequencies. For example, a standard setup on a J-Bass with single-coils employs 250kΩ pots for VOLUME, VOLUME, and TONE. The darker effect of a 250K pot is meant to balance the inherent brightness of most single-coil pickups. With humbuckers, 500K pots are recommended, as their brighter response counterbalances the decrease in high frequency typical of heavily wound dual-coil pickups. Although hum-canceling, a split-coil P-Bass pickup has only one coil under each string, making 250K pots the stock choice. If you want to upgrade your instrument while preserving the basic character, use better-quality pots of the original value—when you ditch the schwag and upgrade to primo like Alpha, Bourn, or the ubiquitous CTS pots, there will be a distinct improvement in clarity, and a more "solid" feel to the rotation.

COOKING WITH POTS

Pots of specific values can be seen as part of a tone recipe. Putting a 500kΩ pot into a P-Bass can have several results. As a volume pot, 500K will effectively brighten the tone and provide a bit more output. However, it can also cause an impractical drop in volume from "10 to 8"—a problem that can be mitigated by the use of a linear pot. A 500kΩ tone pot will extend the high-frequency output as well, but rolling back on the control will still produce the response of a 250K pot. The pickup has a profound influence in the total circuit—something to consider when thinking about pot values. For example, many people use 500K for one or both pots with "hot" P-style pickups like the Seymour Duncan Quarter Pounder or DiMarzio DP146. The inherently stronger midrange of these pickups can benefit from the increased highs a 500K pot can induce, making it a common mod for players using heavy effects and overdrive. Using a 1MΩ (megohm) pot can get extremely bright, and in the volume position, may be too much for anything but a super dark pickup. But many pickups can benefit from the extended high end of a 1MΩ tone pot, while retaining the ability to roll it off.

WHAT SIZE POT?

On a more mundane level, there are some measurements you'll want to be aware of. First, there are regular pots, and mini pots; figure out which you'll need. A measurement worth checking is the mounting hole

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size: ⅜" is standard, but not always with imports. Whether you're buying new knobs, or reusing the old ones, you'll want to note whether they require split-shaft pots with a 6mm shaft diameter, or solid shaft—typically ¼" diameter. The height of the shaft is also worth noting; most pots have a ⅜" shaft, but the threading area beneath it can be ⅜" or ¾" in the case of a long-shaft model. If you buy the wrong height, you may have trouble installing the pots correctly.

BUST A CAP

You may have noticed a small capacitor wired between the hot terminal and the casing of the tone pot (ground). The capacitor is what turns the pot into a tone control, by "bleeding" the highs to ground, creating a variable lowpass filter. Even though the signal at the cap doesn't make its way to your output jack, its presence in the circuit makes it a part of the tone recipe. Typically in a passive bass, you'll see a cap with a value of .047µF (microfarads). While different-brand caps of the same value have distinct characteristics, their actual values can vary ±20% or more, making it tough to pick a predictable winner—but a popular choice is the Sprague "Orange Drop" capacitor, found for many years in Fender and Gibson instruments. The real fun begins when trying caps with different values: Lowering the value sets a higher corner frequency (where the high rolloff begins), removing less of the highs as you rotate to "0." But another effect is the shift in the resonant peak frequency; higher-value caps lower the resonant peak, which is most noticeable with the tone control completely off. If you're looking for dark, punchy tone, a .047µF cap rolled back will put you

in the ballpark. If you want to preserve more mids and highs as you roll back the tone, look into lower-value caps.

As you can see, even the seemingly simple task of swapping pots can be fertile ground for geekery of immense proportions ... and it gets way deeper. But with this general information, you can begin to form your own ideas about tone recipe, and at very least, not buy the wrong part! When swapping out the guts of your axe, remember that no single element is the magic bullet; you are dealing with an integrated system where all parts contribute to the result. A wide tone palette is possible, even with simple passive electronics—but if you're cooking up your own recipe, don't forget the pot! **BP**

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JAZZ CONCEPTS

Two Basses Are Better Than One

Will & John's Silent Night

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

"IT'S SUCH A RARE THING, PLAYING WITH TWO BASSISTS IN THE SAME band," says Will Lee. "What's the reasonable choice for any bass player? To fill the holes in a tasty way. But, when you have two bass players, then it becomes crucial for both to know where the holes aren't." Uncle Will and I are hanging out after we rehearse a Christmas show with the WDR Big Band, and he's philosophizing about the beauty and challenge of having two bassists in the same band. I'm bass two—second bass—but Will makes me feel at home.

Lee's supportive demeanor is one of the not-so-secret secrets of his success: He always makes other players feel comfortable, while at the same time inspiring, goading, and pushing them into their best performances. He's also a master party-starter, grooving from the first note to the last note of every concert.

"The groove is something you can't ever lose sight of," says Lee. "You have to always keep it in mind. You have to let a groove be what it is—don't ever try to change it from what it is! There is only one pulse for a song, and you have to keep yourself in that pulse."

One of the highlights of our concert together was a Michael Abene arrangement of the holiday chestnut "Silent Night," which was composed in 1818 by German composer Franz Xaver Gruber. Although it's almost 200 years old, the composition lends itself to

INFO

JOHN GOLDSBY

Visit John on the web at **johngoldsby.com**, and listen to the individual and combined tracks of "Will and John's Silent Night" at **john.goldsby.de/category/articles/**.

CONNECT

- Listen to Stanley Clarke and Will Lee play Clarke's "School Days."
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- Watch Superbass! perform with special guest John Goldsby.

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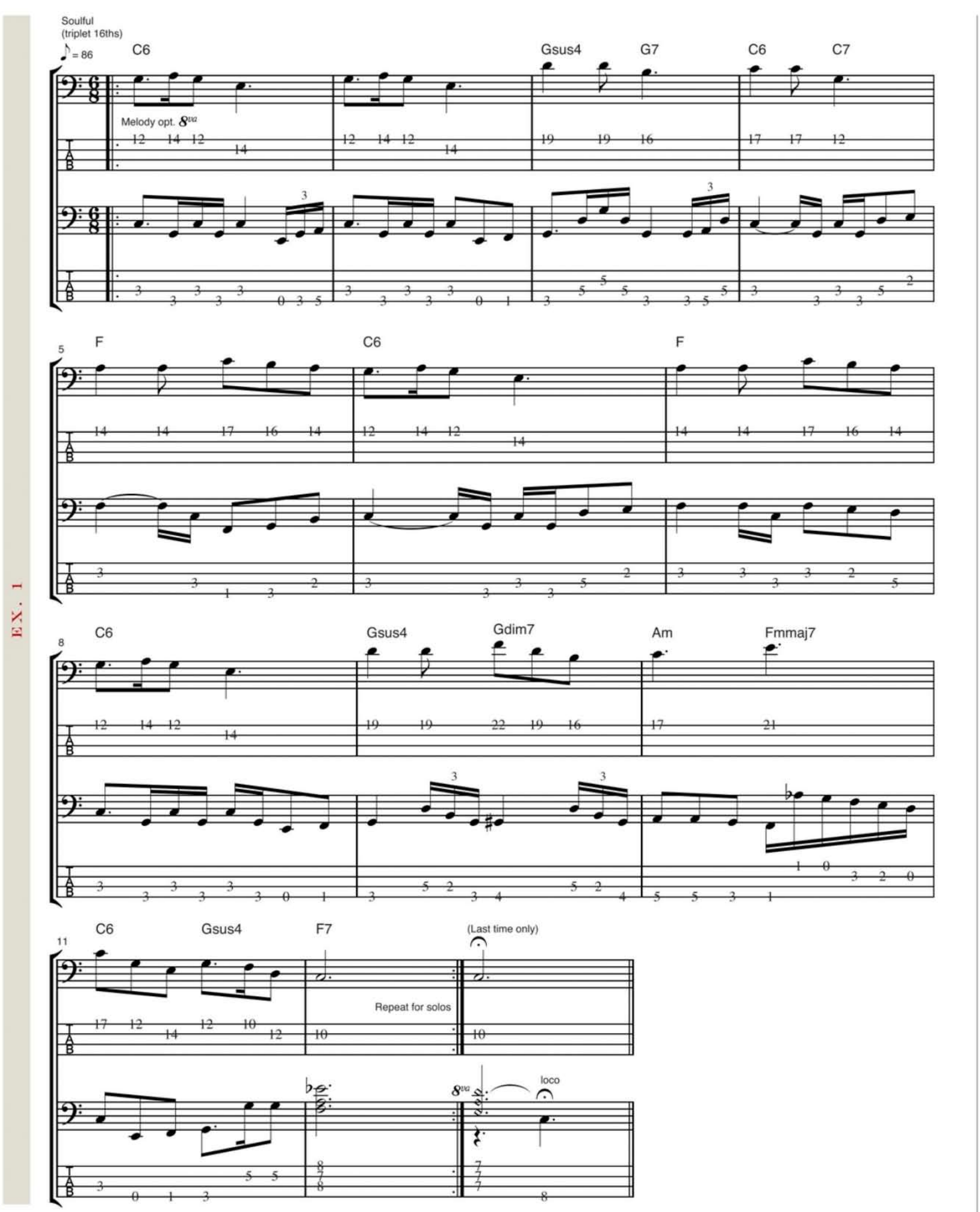
Soulful
(triplet 16ths)
= 86
C6
Gsus4
G7
C6
C7
Melody opt. 8va
F
C6
F
C6
Gsus4
Gdim7
Am
Fmmaj7
C6
Gsus4
F7
(Last time only)
Repeat for solos
8va
loco

EX. 1

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a bluesy 6/8 treatment, with some jazzy passing chords. Back in his day, Herr Gruber could have never fathomed his quaint religious melody being shredded by the likes of Will Lee, dressed in a Santa suit, wailing on his chorus-soaked signature Sadowsky 4-string.

"Will and John's Silent Night" is a two-bass duet. The Bass 1 part is the top, melody voice. The melody can be played either in the middle range of the bass, or up above the 12th fret (as notated in the tablature). The 8va marking stands for the Italian term *all'ottava,* which means to play the part an octave higher than written. 8va is a useful writing technique when dealing with very high bass notes. The Italian term *loco* is used to indicate "sounding as written," or to play the part in the written register.

The Bass 2 part is a bass line, which outlines the harmony and keeps the groove flowing. To get in the "Silent Night" pocket, think of 6/8 meter with a backbeat accent on beat *four*. The underlying 16th-notes are shuffled with a triplet feeling. Work out both bass parts first, record the bass line (Bass 2), and then overdub the melody (Bass 1). You can also record and loop the Bass 2 part several times as a backing track. Play the melody (Bass 1) on top of the Bass 2 track, solo for a few choruses, and then take out the melody. Better yet, call your best bass buddy and go play the duet with him or her. Take turns blowing on the changes, and see what kind of lines and bass harmonies grow from the written parts.

Lee notes, "Do I want to make a bed for the other bass line to lie in? A very low range? Or do I choose to be in the middle register? Sometimes it helps to be in the same range and be in concert with the other bass. Then I'm not so out of the way that we lose the energy."

Playing with another bass player, whether in duo or as part of an ensemble, creates new colors and many crucial sonic choices. Says Lee, "Matching the sounds of the two instruments is important. When I'm playing underneath another bass, I'm not going for a high-end sparkly sound. But then when I solo, I might have to cut through more."

A key point to keep in mind when playing with two bass players is that it's not a contest. The focus should stay on listening, supporting, blending, and making the music sound good. Says Will, "There's only one spotlight, and only one person can have it at a time. Get out of the way, and let that person shine. Let the music come alive. You'll get your chance to shine also." **BP**

5 Holiday Rules For Gettin' Down With Other Bass Players (use liberally throughout the year)

1. Listen. Match the volume of the other bassist and find a tone that is homogenous, yet stands out.

2. Not too high, not too low. Both bass guitars and double basses cover about a three-octave range. When two bassists play together, it sounds good if both parts are within a two-octave range. If the range is too wide, there's a big gap of midrange harmonic information. One or both bassists can also fill in the midrange using double-stops or chords. Of course, if you're playing with three or more bassists . . .

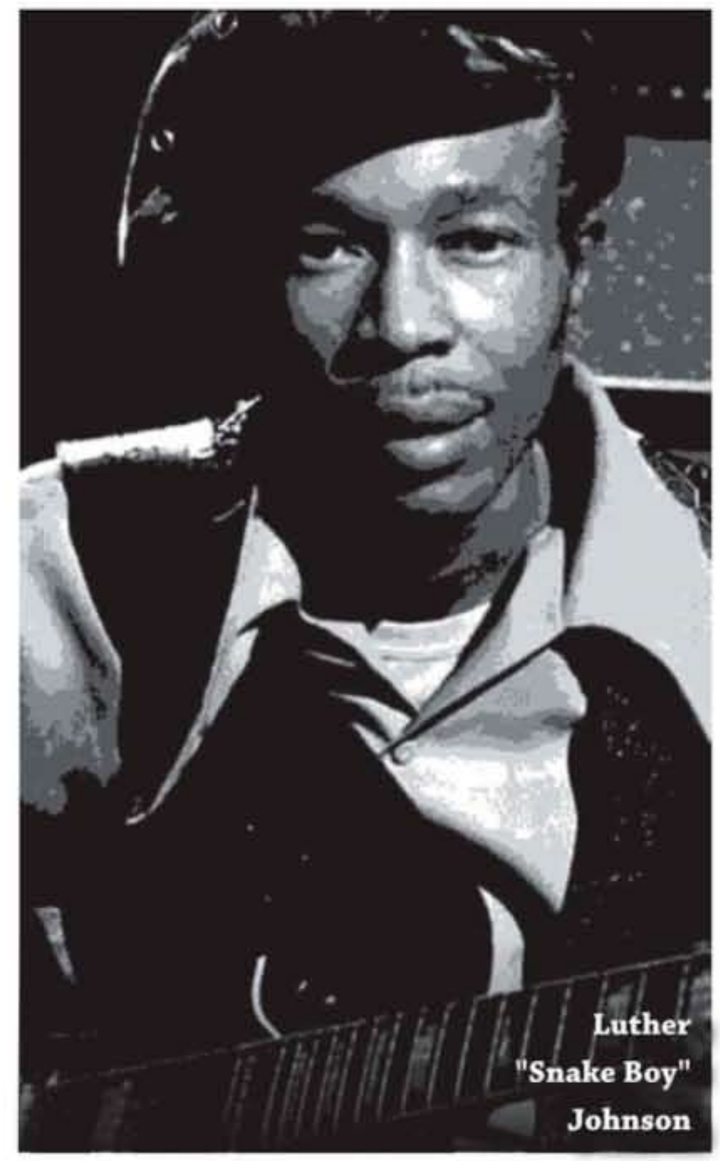
3. Less is more. Don't overplay! You'll sound more musical if you both start with the minimum amount of notes that you need to play a groove or melody. Add variety to the sound by varying the rhythmic density—from both playing sparsely to one or both playing lots of notes.

4. Agree. Make sure you and your bass buddy agree on the form, harmony, and rhythmic feeling of the song you're playing.

5. Complement. The word complement (as opposed to "compliment") means "to add to something in a way that enhances, improves, or makes it perfect." You can also compliment your bass pal on his new sneakers, but musically speaking, complementing other players will make the music sound good and also build your career.

BLUES YOU CAN USE

Luther "Guitar Junior" Johnson



Luther "Snake Boy" Johnson

"Big Mama" Thornton

A Tale Of Two Luthers

BY ED FRIEDLAND

THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT FALLS ON A TRACK BY ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEMALE blues artists of all time, Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton. Best known for topping the 1953 Billboard R&B charts with her original recording of "Hound Dog," her contribution to popular music was woefully overshadowed by the 1956 Elvis Presley version. But Big Mama's growl and soulful wail became a template for artists like Koko Taylor, Janis Joplin, and Shemekia Copeland, and as a rare female blues harpist, she inspired players like Annie Raines, Gaye Adegbaloloa, and Robin Rogers. Listening to tracks Big Mama cut in 1966 backed by the Muddy Waters Blues Band, I was seized by the constant pulsing of the bass, particularly on "I'm Feeling Alright." The bass player was exhibiting rare facility with extended triplet runs throughout the groove—and while it bordered on overplaying, it was all right with Muddy.

Like many music journos, I often use allmusic.com as a source when researching stories; in this case, the site credits Luther "Guitar Junior" Johnson as the bass player on the track. As he is obviously known as a guitarist, I thought a crosscheck was in order. "Guitar Jr." played with Muddy Waters, but his tenure is listed between 1972–79—this recording happened in 1966. As it turns out, Luther "Snake Boy" Johnson (a.k.a. "Georgia Boy") played with Muddy in the mid '60s, and while his career also focused mainly on guitar, a very detailed discography at keeponliving.at lists him as playing bass on those sessions. (Adding to the confusion is the fact that both L.J.s had relocated to Boston at some point, and there is a third blues guitarist named Luther "Houserocker" Johnson—but as it turns out, he was too young.) Special thanks to Michael "Mudcat" Ward and "Monster" Mike Welch of Sugar Ray & the Bluetones for their valuable input on this account. Was it "Guitar Junior" or "Snakeboy" who really played it? Based on the evidence, my money is on the Snake ("Georgia Boy").

continued on page 66

INFO

ED FRIEDLAND

Ed "the Bass Whisperer" Friedland plays, writes, and teaches out of his bass base in Austin, Texas. **edfriedland.com**

LISTEN

Big Mama Thornton, *With the Muddy Waters Blues Band - 1966* [Arhoolie Records, 2004]

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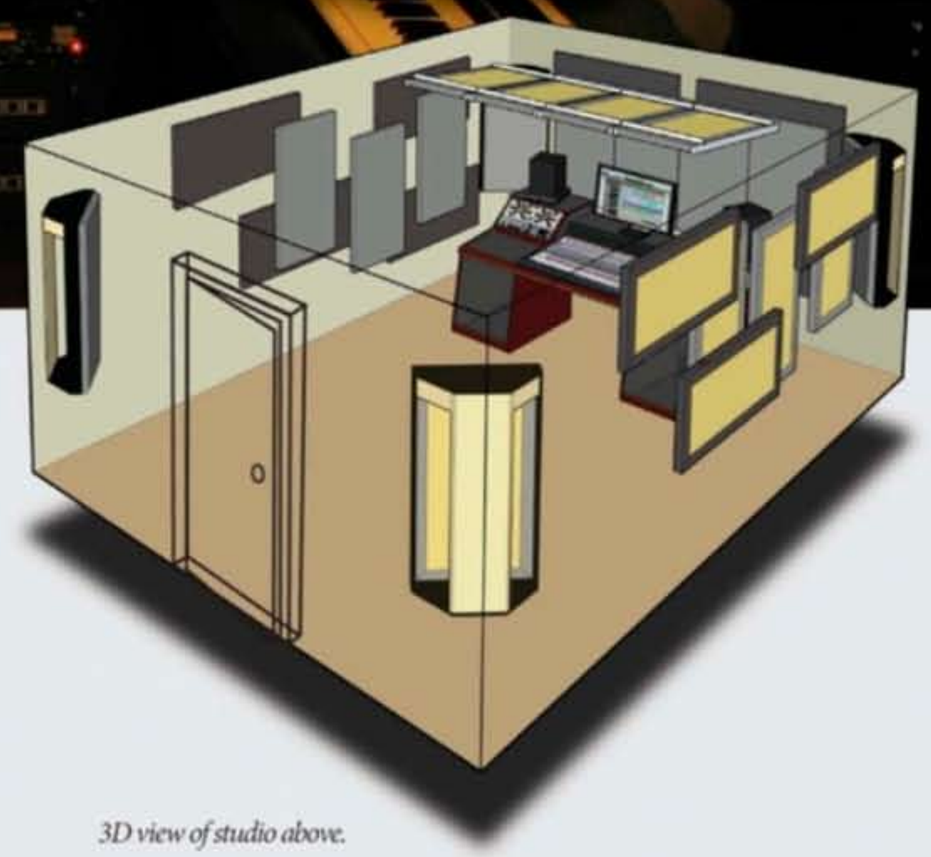
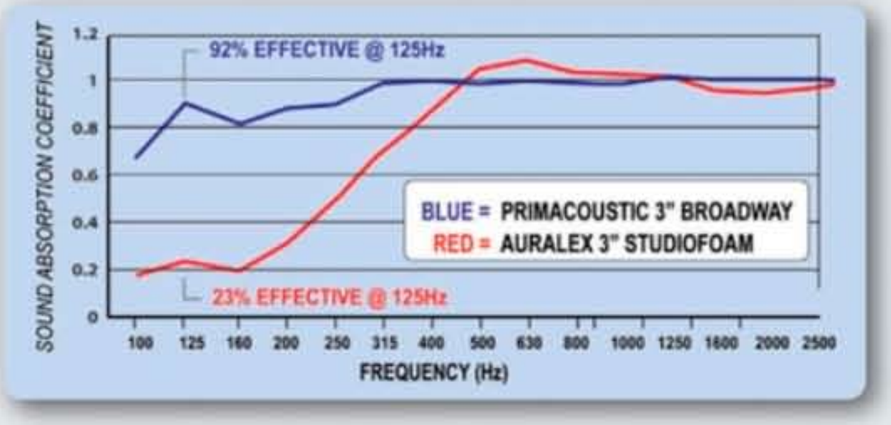


3D view of studio above.



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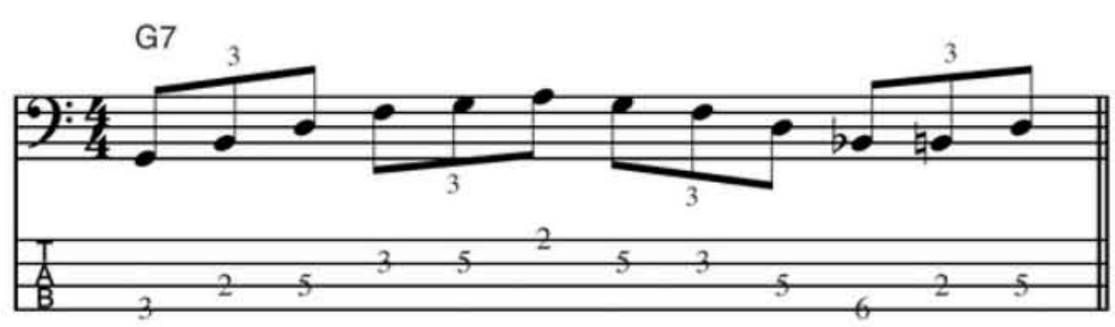
Regardless, let's take a look at this rollicking gambol of a shuffle in the key of *A*. When you consider the tempo is 104 BPM, the level of sustained activity in this line is mind-blowing. Most modern-day blues bassists would play that many notes in a week, but what you see in this single chorus happens through the entire 3:28 track—as well as every other mid to fast shuffle on the record. One precedent for this concept is the "rolling" bass line chorus in the classic arrangement of "After Hours," shown in **Ex. 1**. By transposing this rangy riff to *C* and *D*, you'll be able to apply it to a 12-bar form in *G*—a task that has been torturing bassists for decades.

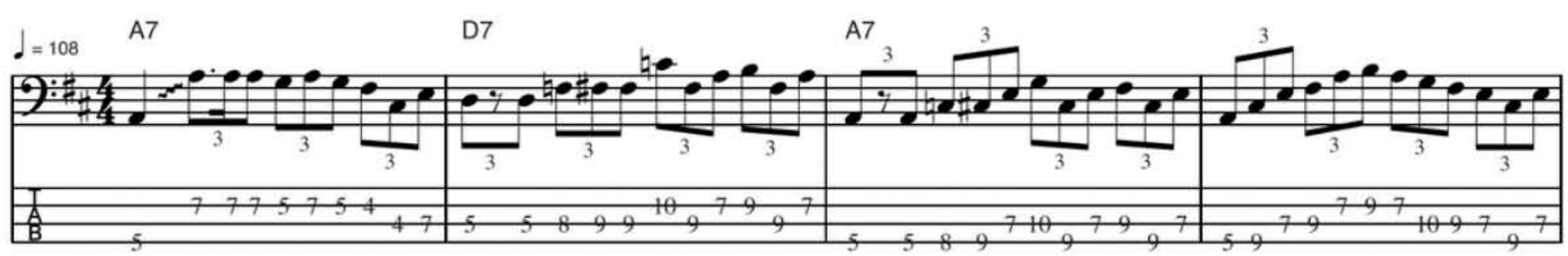
Example 2 is a close approximation of Luther Johnson's line during the first chorus of "I'm Feeling Alright." The actual melodic content is cool, surprisingly technical, and definitely brings to mind GPBS (Guitarist Playing Bass Syndrome). The tone is thick, punchy, and dark; it sounds like a 30"-scale bass with flatwounds—the shorter scale would certainly make playing this line easier! I've written much of the line to go up the neck on the *E* and *A* strings instead of playing across the fingerboard, as the fast triplet runs seem to lay better there, with a thicker tone in that region.

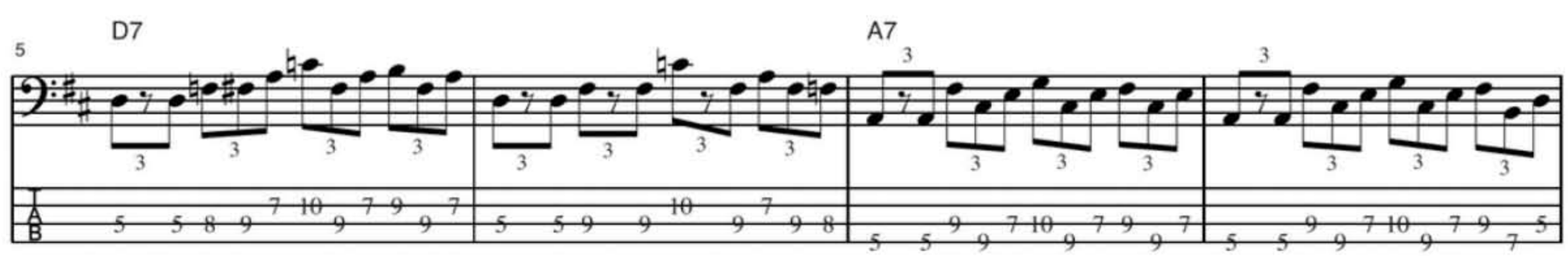
Luther "Snakeboy/Snake/Georgia Boy/Little Luther/Luther King" Johnson's contributions to blues music are significant, although challenging to track. While his busier approach to the bass may not always work with some bands, there is a lot to be learned from his melodic ideas and sheer determination to put them all across. And if it was all right with Muddy, it's all right with me. **BP**

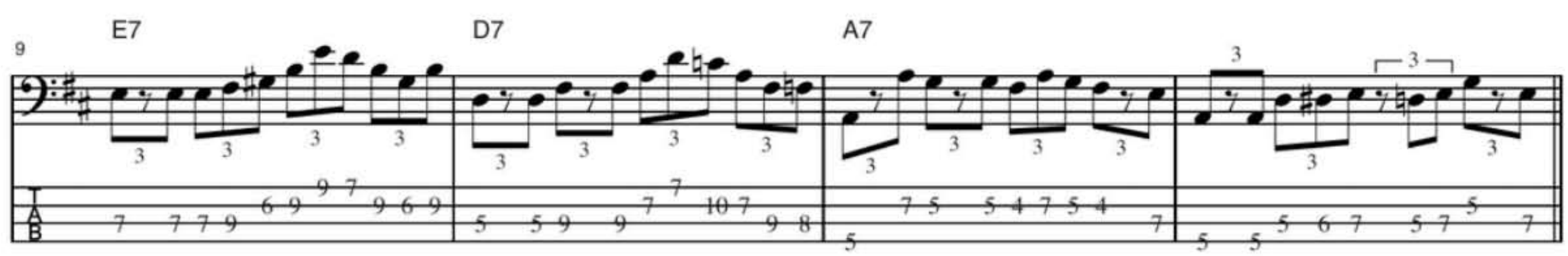
EX. 1



EX. 2







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TRANSCRIPTION

"Freeway Jam" By Jeff Beck

Phil Chen's Complete Bass Line

BY CHRIS JISI

THE BED UPON WHICH GUITARIST JEFF BECK HAS BUILT his unparalleled solo career is lined with great bass and drum tandems, including Tim Bogert and Carmine Appice, Clive Chaman and Cozy Powell, Wilbur Bascomb with both Bernard Purdie and Narada Michael Walden, and Tal Wilkenfeld and Vinnie Colaiuta. It was the natural chemistry of an Island team, however, that would spark Beck's best-selling and most critically acclaimed CD, *Blow by Blow*. How Jamaica natives Phil Chen and Richard Bailey arrived on the album was as unexpected as the milestone status it would attain on the way to forever changing the landscape of guitar, rock & roll, jazz-fusion, and instrumental music. Deciding to move away from hard rock to more of an R&B and jazz-influenced sound, Beck lined up keyboardist Max Middleton (a veteran of two Jeff Beck Group albums) and legendary producer George Martin, and came upon Chen as a member of Gonzalez, a collection of rotating musicians (including Middleton and Bailey) who would play at London's notorious industry haunt, The Speakeasy Club. Assembling at Martin's AIR Studios in the fall of 1974, the three, along with Appice (from the just-disbanded Beck, Bogert & Appice) began rehearsing material. Appice even recording a handful of tracks before his alleged demand for equal billing ended his involvement in the project. The 11th-hour need for a drummer was filled when Chen suggested his fellow countryman Bailey, then just 19.

The unspoken, intuitive hookup of the two fuel all nine tracks, including a reggae cover of the Beatles' "She's a Woman," the odd-meter, Martin-orchestrated gem "Scatterbrain," the group-written funker "Air Blower," and the epic Stevie Wonder-written ballad "Cause We've Ended As Lovers" (on which Phil pretended he had a fretless for his sliding, legato part, inspired by Ron Carter). The disc's "hit," Middleton's driving shuffle, "Freeway Jam," perhaps best captures the duo's energy and role: Chen locked deeply in his melodic ostinato, allowing Bailey to unleash furious fills and engage in interplay with Beck and Middleton. Chen plucked his '62 Fender Precision with La Bella flatwounds, which was recorded both direct and through a miked Ampeg B-15. Having memorized the song form in rehearsals, he recalls doing a few run-throughs and not more than two takes, with Beck and Middleton adding some overdubs later. Neither Beck nor George Martin offered any direction or comments regarding the bass line, leaving Phil to play what he felt.

The track begins with Bailey setting up the groove for Middleton and Chen's entrance (via 10ths played with his thumb and index finger) four bars later. Phil maintains the downbeat anticipation for much of the intro (which Beck and Middleton match at times), while quickly settling into short note/long note pattern that is an essential part of the track's feel. At letter **A**, Beck states a pre-chorus melody, followed by some soloing, with Chen continuing his pace, colored by the 10ths in bar 30. He laughs, "That's from my Chuck Rainey influence. In London they used to call me Chinese Chuck." Four bars before Beck's main chorus melody, at letter **B**, Phil moves to a melodic pattern that serves as the song's sub-hook. "I can't remember for sure, but it feels like we brought that bass line in early—or Jeff waited four bars—to help set up his melody. At any rate, I was listening to the Miles Davis album *Jack Johnson* [Columbia, 1971] at the time, and this bass line was inspired by and adapted from what the great Michael Henderson played on the song 'Right Off.'" Letter **B** leads to the bridge, at **C**, where Chen "stays on the roots" to help anchor Bailey's bombastic, fusiony fills. For Beck's solo at **D**, Phil returns to his chorus part, with the occasional walk-up. Note his high slide in bar 91, the result of a reaction to the climax of a tangent Beck and Bailey had gotten on a few measures prior.

Letters **E** and **F** mark the return of the main melody and the second bridge, with Phil maintaining his previous pulses. Finally, for the outro at letter **G**, Middleton steps forward and Chen loosens up a bit, playing off Bailey's bell-led cross rhythms in bars 140, 142, and 156, and taking some breaths throughout. Advises Phil, "It's nice to read the part, but it's more important to feel it. Richard and I are sitting in the pocket,

INFO

LISTEN

Jeff Beck, *Blow By Blow* [Epic, 1975]

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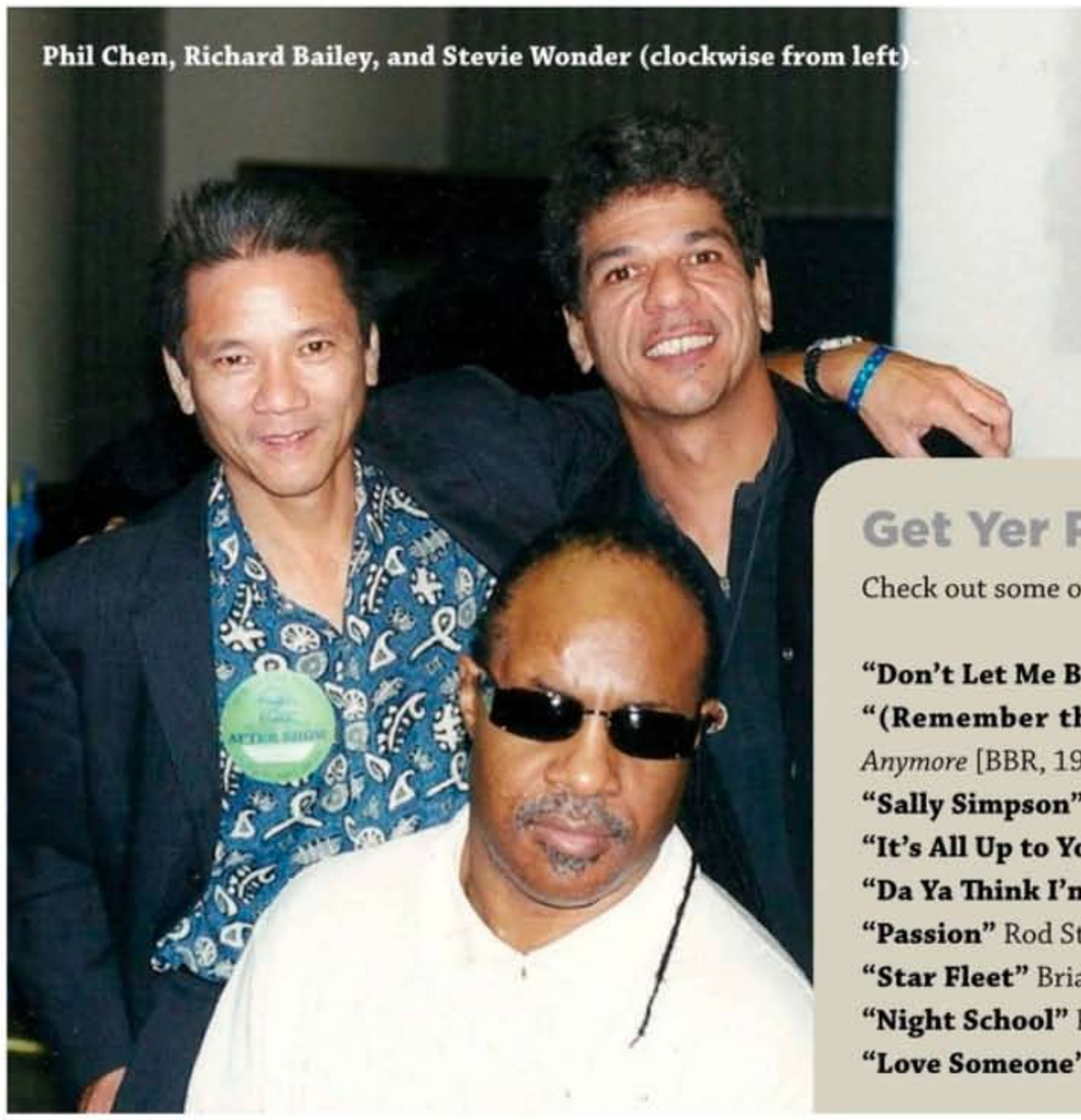

Phil Chen, Richard Bailey, and Stevie Wonder (clockwise from left)

and we're both loose and tight at times, but we're always pushing the groove forward, too. And listen to Jeff, as well; two of the highpoints of my career have been playing with him and with Steve Cropper, because they both have amazing feels." He continues, "From there, create your own bass part to the song. Copying is great for learning, but ultimately, it has to come from you. Playing from the heart is what music is all about." **BP**

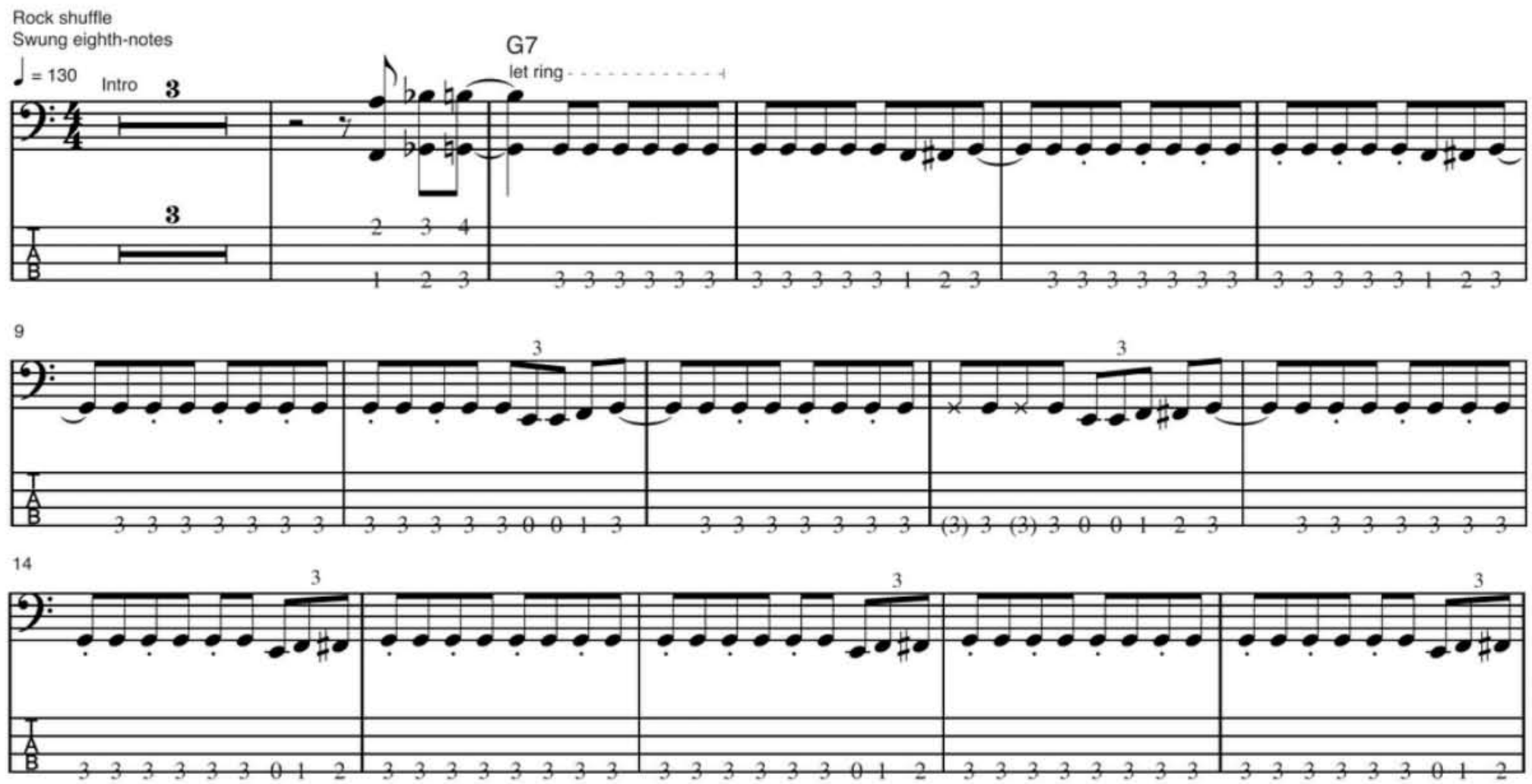
Get Yer Phil!

Check out some of these gems of Chen's illustrious career.

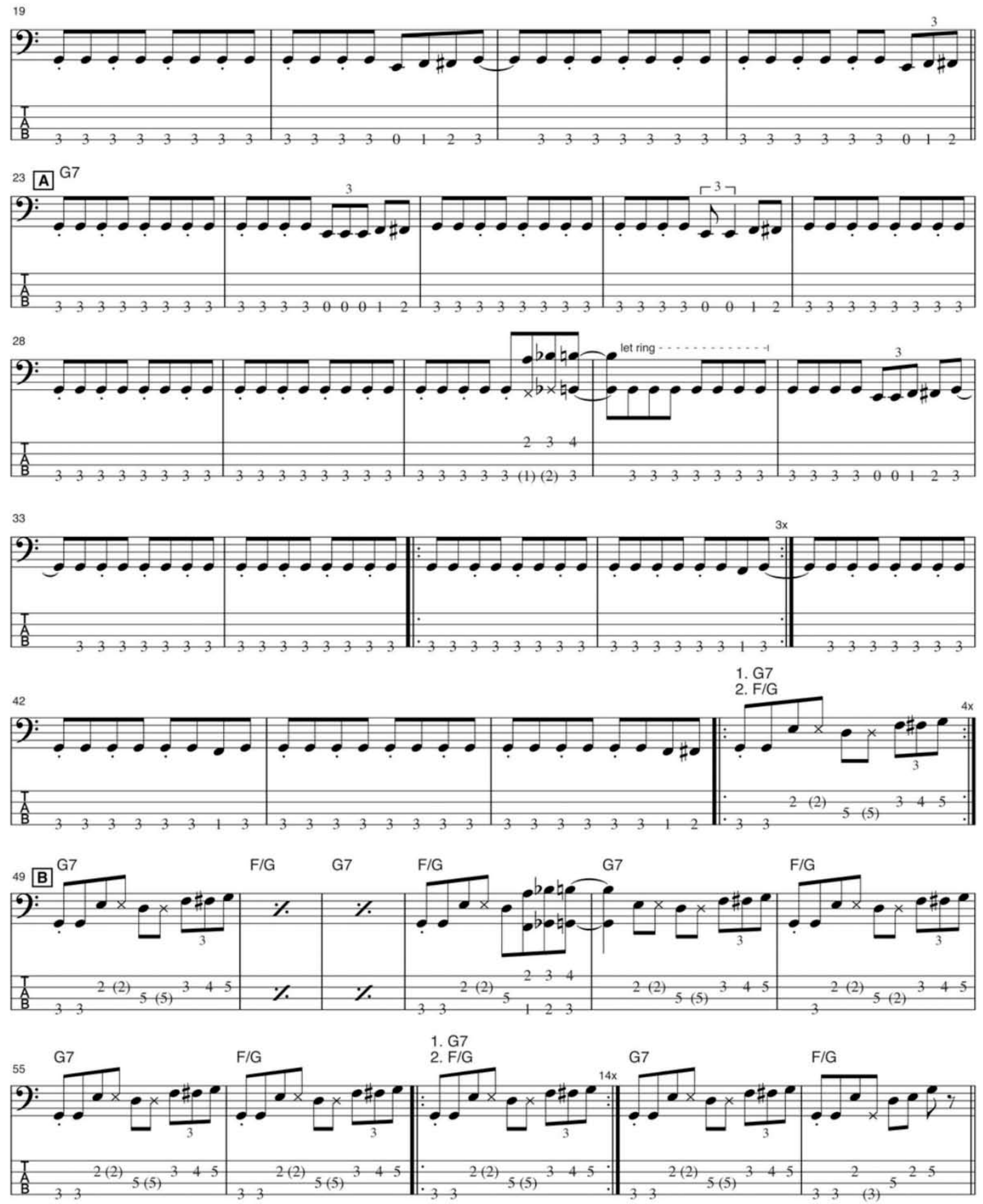
"Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight" Doris Troy, *Stretching Out* [Polydor, 1974]
"(Remember the Days of) The Old Schoolyard" Linda Lewis, *Not a Little Girl Anymore* [BBR, 1975]
"Sally Simpson" The Who, *Tommy: Original Soundtrack*, [Polydor, 1975]
"It's All Up to You" Jim Capaldi, *Short Cut Draw Blood* [Edsel, 1975]
"Da Ya Think I'm Sexy" Rod Stewart, *Blondes Have More Fun* [Warner Bros., 1978]
"Passion" Rod Stewart, *Foolish Behaviour* [Warner Bros., 1981]
"Star Fleet" Brian May & Eddie Van Halen, *Star Fleet Project* [EMI, 1983]
"Night School" Pete Townshend, *White City* (outtake) [Atlantic, 1985]
"Love Someone" Chantelle Barry (single) [Rich Gypsy Music, 2012]

"Freeway Jam" By Jeff Beck

Transcription by Chris Jisi



Freeway Jam By Max Middleton Essex Music International, Inc. c/o The Richmond Organization (ASCAP). All Rights Reserved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23 A G7
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1. G7
2. F/G
4x
49 B G7 F/G G7 F/G G7 F/G
55 G7 F/G
1. G7
2. F/G
14x
G7 F/G

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73 C F/G E♭/F D/G F/G E♭/F

78 Amaj7 G/A F/G B♭7 A♭7

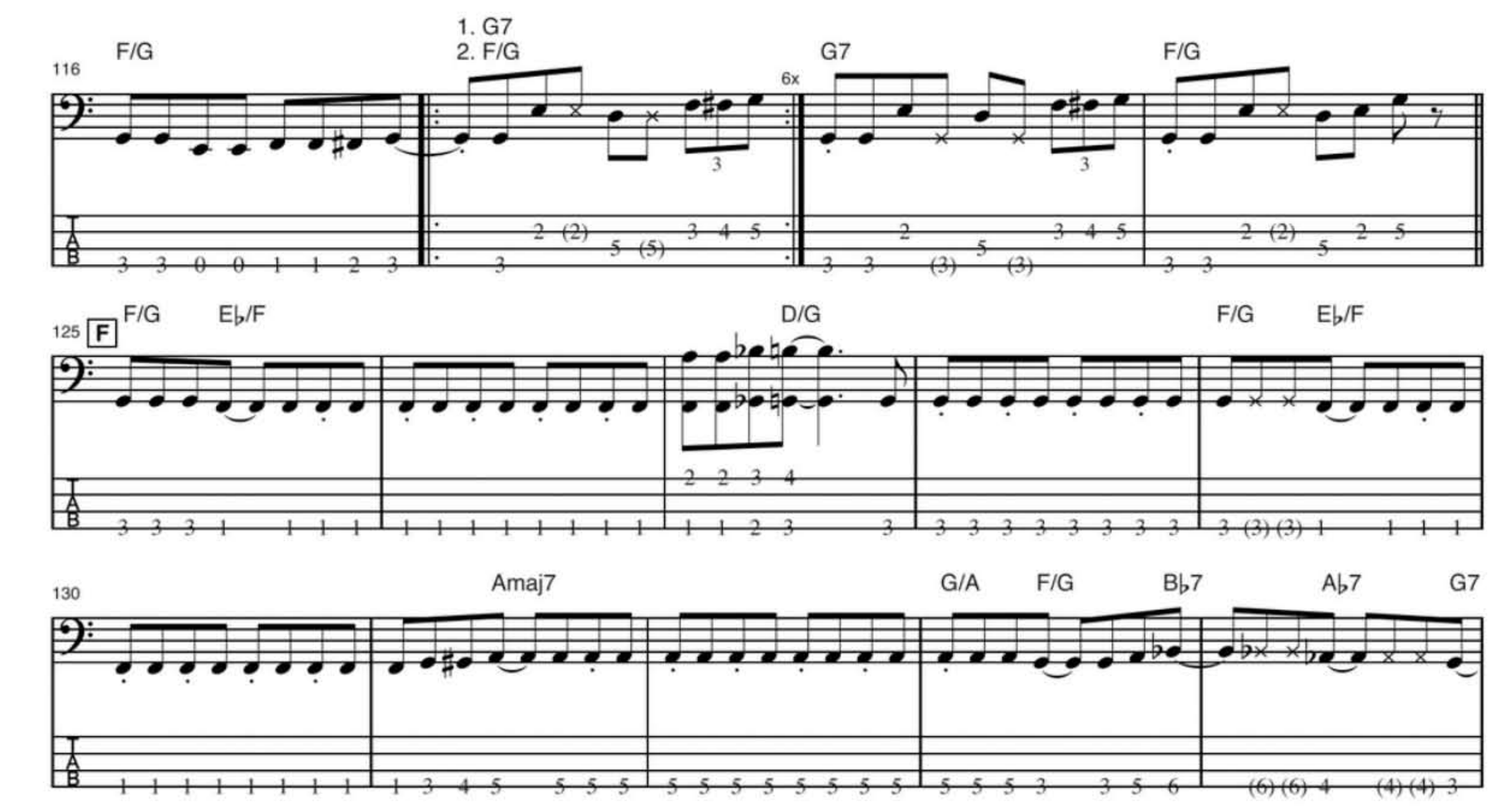
83 G7 D G7 F/G G7

88 F/G G7 F/G G7 F/G

93 1. G7 2. F/G G7 6x F/G G7 F/G

103 G7 F/G 1. G7 2. F/G 3. G7 3x F/G

109 E G7 F/G 1. G7 2. F/G 4x G7


116
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1. G7
2. F/G
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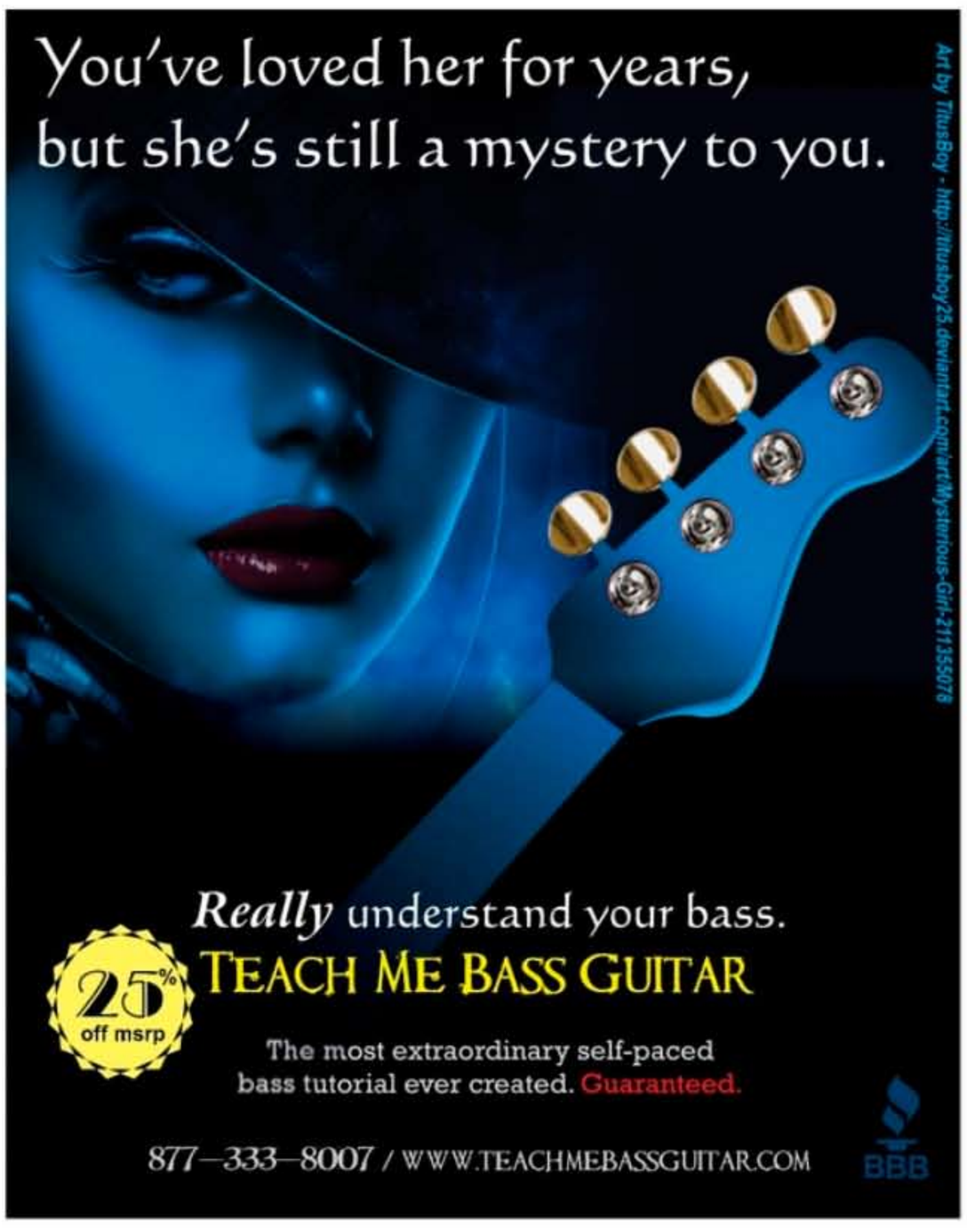
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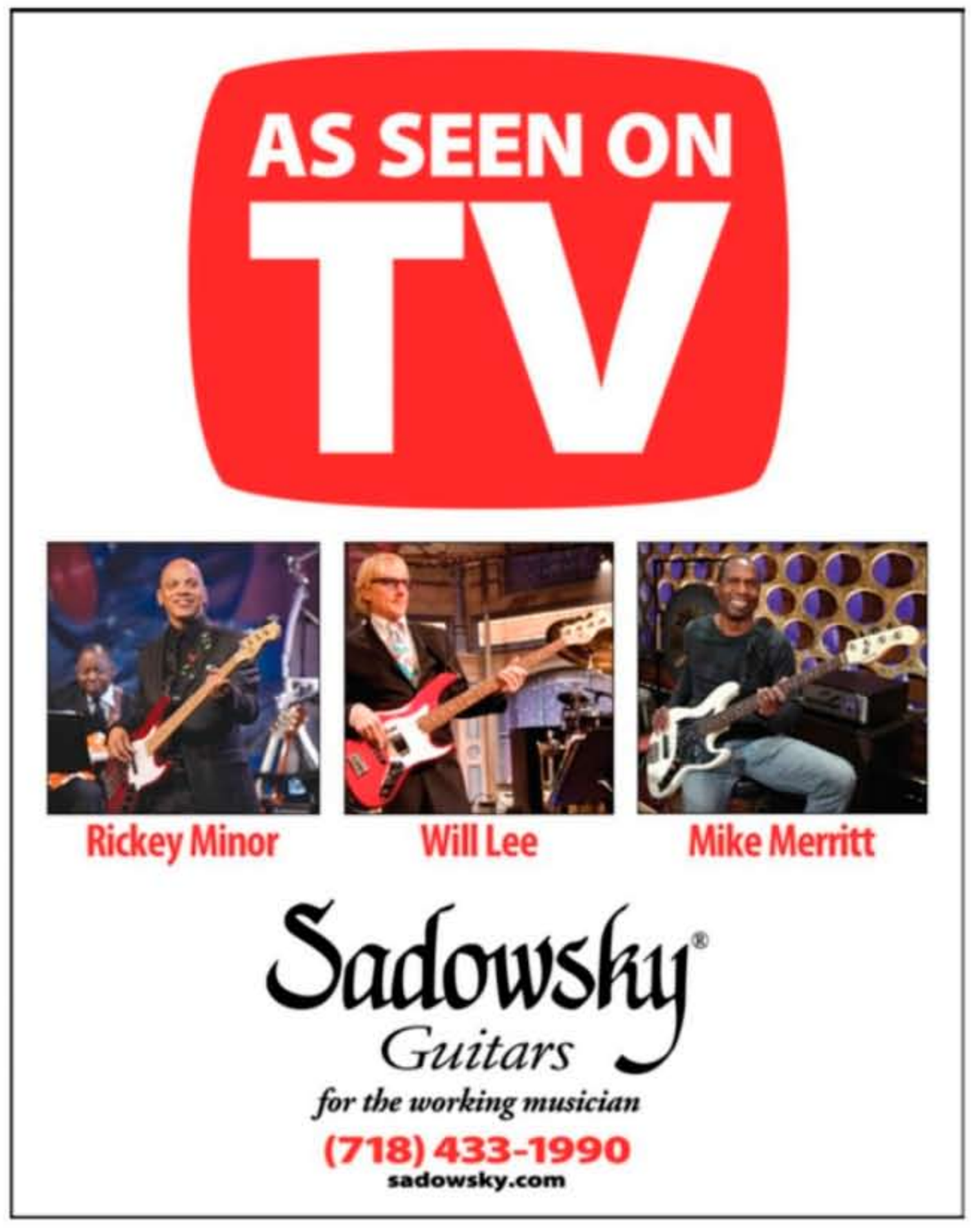
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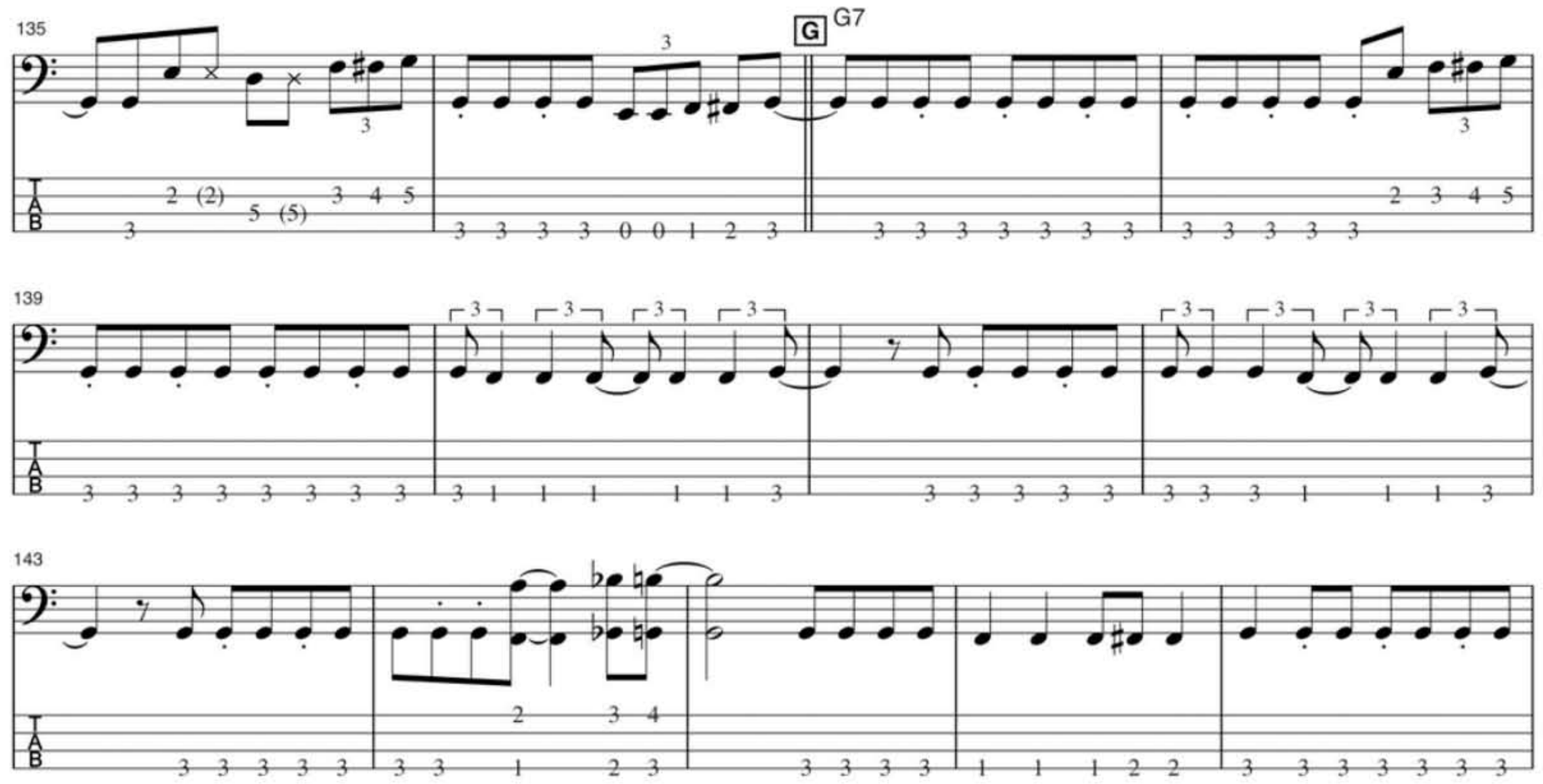
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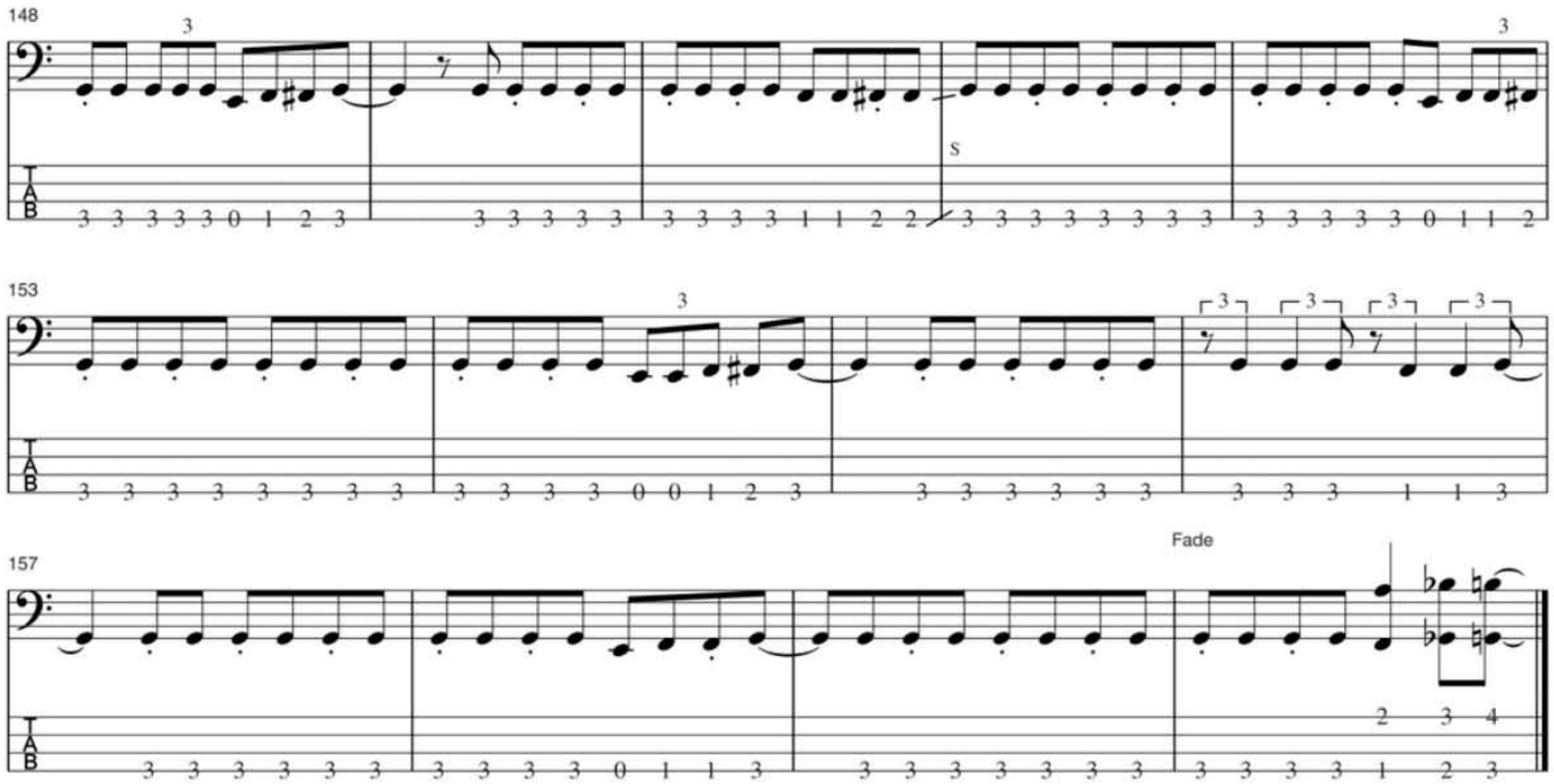

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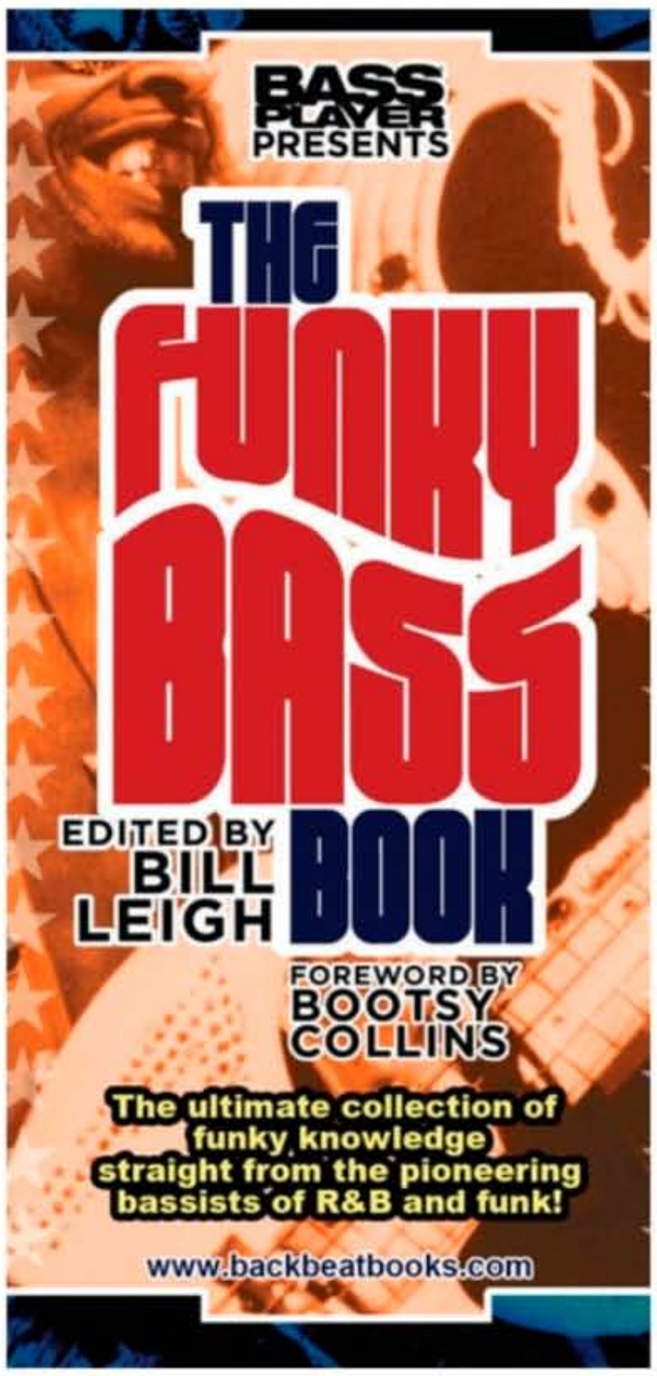

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Over the past 20-plus years with Bass Player, *Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more, or they fail to be interesting—whichever comes first.*

OUTTAKES

Photograph from March 2002

THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERCA HAVE A MOTTO. THEY RAISE their right hands with three fingers skyward and promise to "Be Prepared." Not a bad motto, as mottoes go. It certainly has a more pragmatic ring than "When in doubt, just add cheese," or "Bros before hoes," or "We're Primus and we suck." And in general, I have found that living said motto will most likely help lead down a path of success.

So, do you think I would follow my own philosophy?

I thought so.

MeShell Ndegeocello was the subject of my next shoot and as usual, I went through my standard checklist before departing the office. Camera? Check. Breath mints? Check. Strobes? Of course. I never go anywhere without strobes. I like my shots to be tack-sharp, rarely shooting at anything less than 1/200th of a second, and then using high-power strobes to burst a 1/10,000th of a second, image-freezing flash right down the middle of that. If that don't stamp a sharp image on 50 ISO film, nothing will.

With confidence (and *joie de vivre*) I collected my last-minute thoughts and stood up to leave my desk when the phone rang. It was MeShell's publicist.

"Are you heading over to the shoot? Just a reminder that MeShell can't shoot with strobes. They bother her."

"Wh- wh- what do you mean, n- n- no strobes? I had instantaneously developed a pronounced stutter.

"Can't use 'em. See you."

On the way over, driving in what could only be described as a road-safe fetal position, I did my best to reassure myself that it was okay; that I could shoot with whatever dim February light was left in the room. Too late to rent any other lights, I would supplement the ambient room with the tungsten modelling lamps in the strobe heads.

I felt now completely unprepared. I was no Boy Scout.

But I *am* lucky. MeShell was great to work with and managed to hold herself perfectly still for the nerve-racking 1/8th of a second exposure duration (an eternity in shutter terms). The lighting setup proved to deliver dramatic and moody, rather than bright and sharp, and what resulted from all this improvising was surprisingly much more beautiful than I had expected, with golden, warm tonality courtesy of the tungsten lamps which I never would have considered if I had blustered in with strobes-a-blazin'.

Subsequently, I have added this unorthodox method to my repertoire and take time to convince myself regularly that it was a natural progression of style and technique. (Paul, you *are* quite clever, aren't you? Why, yes, Paul, I *am*.) And now I can live the scout motto fully, except that lately I have been putting a lot of cheese on stuff. —PAUL HAGGARD

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